



D.C. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL TO BECOME HOMELAND SECURITY HQ

MENTAL STATE

In September, the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) held a ceremonial ground-breaking to celebrate the creation of a DHS headquarters on the 172-acre west campus of St. Elizabeths—a National Historic Landmark and the first federally operated hospital for the insane. The groundbreaking also commemorated the awarding of a \$435 **continued on page 20**



BOX FOR COOK+FOX ARCHITECTS

CURTAIN GOES UP ON THE NEW HENRY MILLER'S THEATRE AT ONE BRYANT PARK

SHOWTIME

In its previous incarnations over the last nine decades, Henry Miller's Theatre on West 43rd Street has been a Broadway mainstay, a discotheque, and a porn palace. Reaching back into the past was therefore something of a delicate matter for Cook + Fox Architects, which has resurrected the theater's glory days in the base of the firm's Bank of America tower that soars 55 stories above. Fortunately, designers found a guiding spirit in the original theater's namesake, the actor and producer Henry W. Miller. "This is a unique typology: a Broadway theater with a shallow balcony arch that keeps the audience close to the stage," said partner Rick Cook, noting that the 1918 venue emphasized a direct relationship between audience and actors. **continued on page 14**



COALITION BATTLES PLAN FOR BROADWAY TRIANGLE

MATT CHABAN

GATHERING STORM

The Broadway Triangle looks like countless other stretches of North Brooklyn, a mix of machine shops, walk-ups, and vacant lots seeded among the bistros and luxury condos that have moved in over the last decade. The area, surrounded by communities of Latinos, African Americans, and Chasidic Jews has seen its fair share of conflict, but a new battle has broken out, some say more raucous than all those that have preceded it, and it is a battle over a rezoning. "It's like the last open piece of Oklahoma Territory," **continued on page 5**

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BROOKLYN'S CITY POINT GETS \$20 MILLION STIMULUS BOOST TO WHOSE RESCUE

City Point, the mixed-use development replacing the Albee Square Mall in downtown Brooklyn, is one of New York's first recipients of federal **continued on page 4**



THREE NEW HOUSES IN CONTEXT. SEE PAGE 24

COURTESY OBRA ARCHITECTS

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WHEN THE PARTY'S OVER

After three decades of dereliction, Philip Johnson's New York State Pavilion in Flushing Meadows Corona Park got a recall from limbo on September 15, when state preservation officials unanimously voted to add it to the state and national registers of historic places. The listing will help secure sorely needed funds for rehabilitation, possibly paving the way to reopen the city's most prominent midcentury ruin. Against the backdrop of the 2016 Olympics frenzy, however, this World's Fair relic reminds us that long after the champagne corks and confetti are swept away, what's left is often a legacy of boosterism and empty rhetoric rather than a viable urban future.

Completed in 1964 as one of the few architectural high points of the World's Fair, Johnson's pavilion was an undeniable hit: More than six million people passed through the ensemble, which centered upon the "Tent of Tomorrow," a colorful plastic canopy pitched atop the world's largest cable suspension roof. Below was the famous terrazzo map of New York State, based on a Texaco road atlas—now wrapped in chain-link and subject to advancing deterioration—while above soared three observation towers topping out at more than 200 feet and reached by "Sky Streak" elevators (now sadly inoperable). Then there was the Theaterama, the only part of the complex to have been reborn following a 1993 renovation and, this year, a \$23 million expansion for the Queens Theatre in the Park. Upon the fair's opening, no less than Ada Louise Huxtable deemed the pavilion a "runaway success, day or night," adding: "This is 'carnival' with class."

To its credit, the Parks Department, which owns the structure, supported the historic register listing to help rescue the pavilion. (The complex is also under review as a potential city landmark by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, though no timeline has been set for a decision.) But three decades of neglect is plainly visible to millions roaring past on the Long Island Expressway. Indeed, state officials took the exceptional step of declaring the pavilion a "fragile and short-lived resource," since it does not meet the standard listing criteria of being at least 50 years old.

Today's Olympiad hopefuls pepper their bid books with talk of long-range planning and catalytic regeneration, but as the world gears up for another quadrennial extravaganza, consider those skeletal towers in Queens. In New York—whose own Olympic bid, of course, succumbed to rancorous debate over a white-elephant West Side stadium—we can't even bother to fix up a work meant to celebrate, in the words of the fair's theme, "Man's achievement on a shrinking globe in an expanding universe."

By turns pathetic and hopeful, the fate of Johnson's monument rests now in the hands of citizen-preservationists. On October 24, Columbia University's Preservation Alumni are sponsoring a volunteer workday to hack back invasive species that have colonized the pavilion, pitching in to salvage its former glory (call the Parks Department at 718-760-6677 for details). Under the tattered Tent of Tomorrow, you too can help conservators collect fragments of the grand terrazzo road map, bits of which vanish with every passing day. **JEFF BYLES**

TO WHOSE RESCUE continued from front page support under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Sources representing the city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC), lease-holding consortium Albee Development, and the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership (DBP) say the \$20 million stimulus—not a cash outlay, but the issuance of triple-tax-exempt Recovery Zone Bonds—will help break the financial logjam for a project viewed as both an economic catalyst for downtown Brooklyn and a desirable address on a new park, Willoughby Square.

But before City Point's first segment reaches the construction phase, it faces a raft of questions from local businesspeople and activists about the neighborhood benefits, the financial projections, and the appropriateness of public rescue for private investments so closely tied to hot-button issues of gentrification.

The development's revised design remains unknown at this writing. Cook + Fox is serving as design architect, bringing strong green credentials to a project legally required to achieve at least LEED Silver. Atlanta-based retail specialists GreenbergFarrow will handle store layouts, loading, and parking. DBP's Roger Fortune describes preliminary massing plans as "essentially a collection of midrise towers with a central courtyard, rather than a single large highrise." Developer Paul Travis of Washington Square Partners describes Phase 1 as two or three buildings with "a four-story commercial component and ten to 14 stories of housing above."

Albee Development—comprising Acadia, MacFarlane Partners, P/A Associates, and Travis—holds the lease for the city-owned site near the corner of Fulton and Flatbush until 2078. Zoned for a floor area ratio of ten with no height limit, the site includes 1.5 million square feet of development rights. Phase 1A, a retail segment of at least 40,000 square feet, will begin construction in March, supporting the "shovel-ready" description despite the lack of design information, while Phase 1B includes affordable housing.

At a September 10 NYC Capital Resource Corporation (CRC) hearing, some critics questioned the use of taxpayer funds to benefit private developers. The mall's demolition in 2008 displaced local businesses that were viable, while City Point's projected retail mix is a particular sticking point: CRC filings state only that "the retail component is expected to include several local and national retailers."

That's not specific enough, according to Bettina Damiani of Good Jobs NY. "When the city allocates subsidies to companies, we don't think they recognize the leverage that they have," she said. "What kind of message does that send to people who have invested their own money, generally hire locally, and have been in the area when times were not great?"

Officials view the subsidy as an investment likely to produce long-range advantages. "The cost to the city of these bonds is a fraction of the income the city will realize from the construction and operation of these projects," said CRC chairman Seth W. Pinsky in a September 15 release. The bond program, said EDC's Vice President for Public Affairs Janel Patterson, follows eligibility guidelines earmarking support for projects stalled because of the current shortage of conventional financing. With exemptions lowering financing costs, she said, EDC's timetable gives the developers until the end of January to close on the bonds.

BILL MILLARD

LETTERS

GO DOWN, GOWANUS

As a dramatic addition to the city's Sunset Park Vision Plan ("Sunrise for Sunset Park?" AN 14_09.09.2009), we call your attention to the master plan created by AIA Brooklyn that looks at how Sunset Park and Red Hook along the Gowanus Expressway corridor could be revitalized if the elevated roadway were removed.

Our plan focuses on reversing traffic, pollution, and blight along 3rd Avenue. We believe that with the removal of the highway, a revitalized avenue could become an active commercial thoroughfare, or, with its abundant width, could even be a tree-lined boulevard reconnecting neighborhoods with bike paths, sidewalk cafes, and other amenities.

We have reviewed the Department of Transportation's alternatives for the repair or

relocation of the roadway, and we are aware that many have advocated a scheme for burying the expressway in a tunnel. However, such schemes fail to address other issues such as neighborhood revitalization, housing, traffic, job opportunities, parks, engineering practicality, and safety. Our vision takes steps toward achieving these goals. It includes the concept endorsed by Representative Jerrold Nadler for the construction of the Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel. It includes a design for a major shipping terminal, and, most notably, it replaces the Gowanus Expressway with a state-of-the-art, cable-suspended roadway high above 1st Avenue, with connections and ramps strategically located to reduce local traffic.

We invite you to learn more about our plan, which includes links to waterfront

parks, by visiting AIA Brooklyn's Blueprint for America submission at www.aia150.org.

GLEN CUTRONA
CHAIRMAN, AIA-150 COMMITTEE
FRANK LOPRESTO
PRESIDENT, AIA BROOKLYN

CORRECTIONS

An article about the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's *LentSpace* project ("Block Party," AN 15_09.23.2009) implied that the space was launched by developer Trinity Real Estate. In fact, the project was conceived by the LMCC.

Our special products supplement ("Moveable Walls," AN 15_09.23.2009) listed an incorrect website for the manufacturer Raydoor. It is www.raydoor.com.

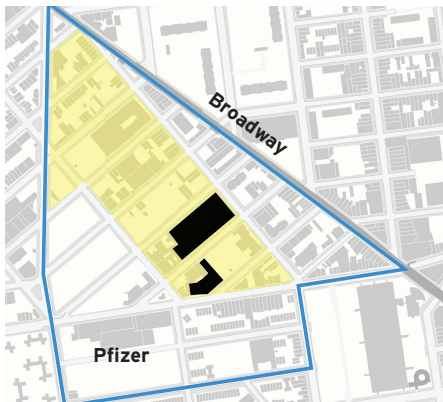
WE SMELL RATS

Really? The British tabloids (all of them) are reporting that architectural fetishist and actor, **Brad Pitt**, has built a gerbil “Neverland” for his six children’s herd on his and Angelina’s estate in the South of France. If you believe what they’re reporting, Pitt paid somewhere between \$50,000 and \$80,000 on an “elaborate gerbil run [that] has a maze of tunnels, seesaws, and platforms for the pets to live in,” according to ever-present anonymous sources. Pets? Gerbils are rodents. Besides, what do gerbils know about architecture? Eavesdrop wants to see the *Rodentia* brief, renderings, reflected-ceiling and sprinkler plans, specs, etc.

YOUNGER THAN SPRINGTIME

According to *The Yale Daily News*, **Robert A.M. Stern**, dean of the School of Architecture and septuagenarian, has announced that the school will be featuring younger lecturers. “We want to highlight the work of younger faculty on the ladder for promotion,” Stern said. “We would like to hear from the young ones.” What about the conventional wisdom that says, “Architecture is an old(er) person’s profession”? Youngsters **Hilary Sample**, **Mark Foster Gage**, and **Vikram Prakash** are scheduled to lecture this fall.

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City plan
City-owned parcels
Coalition plan

have had no involvement in helping craft the city rezoning, a break from precedence whereby community involvement in planning has been extensive. There are also concerns about access to the affordable housing, since two politically connected organizations have already been tapped to develop the city-owned sites.

The coalition reached out to the Pratt Institute to devise its own plan, where students under the direction of former planning commissioner Ron Schiffman created a proposal whose scope reaches well beyond the bounds of the city’s work, and even the nine-block site. The coalition’s plan encompasses the entire urban renewal area, including the defunct Pfizer pharmaceutical plant that the group wants to turn into a manufacturing incubator. It also calls for housing across a range of densities—including buildings as tall as nearby public housing towers. With height, the plan can provide three times as much housing and five times the affordable housing units.

“We can’t reach our sustainability goals or our affordability goals without density,” Schiffman said.

While the coalition’s plan is unlikely to succeed, it has highlighted deficiencies in the city’s plan that the community board now wants addressed, such as increased open space and the inclusion of residents from Bed-Stuy and some extant industrial businesses. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development also drew a lashing from the board for its handling of the planning process.

“HPD is always doing this, and it has to stop,” said Ward Dennis, chair of Community Board 1’s land-use committee. “It’s a good plan, a good contextual plan, the kind we’ve been advocating for. The problem is, the process stinks.”

There is still a remote possibility the plan could be overhauled or even fail, as a neighboring City Council representative opposes the project altogether. But for Rabbi David Needleman, head of the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg and the likely developer of the larger of the two city-owned sites, defeat would be untenable: “What it means if this project is derailed? How long will it take to recreate itself? Maybe never. 30 years ago we started this. Let’s not have to start over” **MATT CHABAN**

GATHERING STORM continued from front page a local developer told *AN* during a contentious community board hearing in July.

Bounded by Broadway, Union Avenue, and Flushing Avenue, the Broadway Triangle was 22 blocks of failing industrial uses that in 1983 was made an urban renewal area in an effort to revive it. That plan never took off, and now the Bloomberg administration wants to rezone a nine-block slice at its heart for housing.

The city’s plan, which is being developed by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, paves the way for 1,850 new apartments, 905 of which will be designated for affordable housing. Two city-owned sites will be wholly dedicated to affordable housing, while the rest of the rezoning is open for developers to build higher in exchange for additional affordable housing in accordance with the inclusionary housing program. Low-rise, contextual zoning has been promised.

The plan has won begrudging support from the local community board and the borough president, as well as a thorough examination from the City Planning Commission at a September 9 hearing on the plan. (A final vote is expected on October 7. Check archpaper.com for a full report.) The main criticism of the plan has had less to do with the plan itself than with the way it was conceived unilaterally by the department. Who will develop the two city-owned sites is of particular concern. And a coalition of more than 40 local groups from across the neighborhood has formed to look into these matters.

“There has never been this kind of support from so many peoples—Latino, Jewish, and black all coming together to fight for a single cause,” said Juan Ramos, director of the Broadway Triangle Community Coalition.

The group’s chief complaint is that they

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MIKINO KIKUYAMA

Txikito brings Basque-country charm to a dreary strip mall on 9th Avenue and 25th Street. Designed and built on a tight budget in a challenging space, the architects, Maria Berman and Brad Horn of Berman Horn Studio, have nonetheless imbued it with appealing warmth and character. Walls and ceiling are clad with reclaimed 19th-century barn wood from New Haven, while custom-designed brass lamps complement the worn texture of the wood. “We wanted to add something historical without it being historicist,” Berman explained. Garage doors slide above the dropped wooden ceiling, leaving the storefront fully open, exposing custom-made tables and chairs from Ikea. Limestone wall panels create a horizontal datum where the eyes can rest, while the bar performs many space-defining functions at once: At its widest it serves as a countertop, then nearly disappears into the wall as it encircles the space, only to pop out above the tables as a wine shelf. The electric blue rear wall and vibrant red accents reflect Basque architectural traditions, while helping to enliven the space, which—along with plenty of Spanish wine—celebrates the tapas bar as a central Basque social construct. **VICTORIA MONJO**

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 7, 2009



A post-disaster trailer home can hardly be called a work of architecture. But Nikolaus Pevsner's well-known aphorism about Lincoln Cathedral—a bicycle shed is a building, but the cathedral is a piece of architecture—might favorably apply to artist Paul Villinski's reinvention of a FEMA-style trailer as a genuine piece of design.

In 2008, Villinski purchased a 30-foot Gulfstream Cavalier in an online General Services

Administration auction, pulled out its toxic formaldehyde guts, carved away its fragile metal skin, and opened up its cagelike interior to create an appealing prototype of a live-work space that he calls *Emergency Response Studio*.

The trailer features a nine-and-a-half-by-six-and-a-half foot wall that folds out as a usable deck, plus a beautifully thin, six-millimeter polycarbonate geodesic skylight that nods to the trademark flimsy

construction of mobile homes.

The trailer is currently parked in front of the Zilkha Gallery at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, along with an exhibition on view through November 8. The gallery itself features an installation curated by Nina Felshin that details Villinski's design process through videos, drawings, collages, and a one-to-one skeletal mock-up of the original trailer, expressing the artist's view of the cramped space



OLIVIA BARTLETT DRAKE

as a jail-like cage. That original Gulfstream was virtually identical to the fifty thousand or so built for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which became notorious for the toxic materials that went into their construction and endure as a symbol of the agency's inefficiency as it attempts to rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Villinski's model sits amid the charming Wesleyan campus—surrounded by a perfectly scaled ensemble of concrete buildings designed by Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates in 1973—sporting a mini-tower windmill and multiple solar panels, and at first approach, it may seem little more than a standard-issue trailer tarted

up with green design. But the project, which developed out of Villinski's desire for a temporary studio in post-Katrina New Orleans, succeeds in turning this mean habitation into a thrilling place to live. That is due in part to the sustainable materials Villinski deployed, such as recycled birch plywood used as walls, and Marmoleum, a natural linoleum made of linseed oil pressed from flax seeds, for the floors. But what is truly sustainable about this project is the way in which Villinski has created an easy and inexpensive model for how architectural process, thoughtful design, and a Skilsaw can turn a "bicycle shed" into architecture.

WILLIAM MENKING

A large advertisement for Bilotta featuring a modern bathroom. The image shows a large, dark, freestanding bathtub in the center. To the left is a long wooden vanity with a white countertop and a large mirror. To the right is a tall, dark shelving unit. The background is a light-colored wall with a shower area. The text "RIFRA" and "www.rifra.com" is visible in the upper right corner of the image.

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The late senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's vision for a new transit hub in midtown Manhattan took an unexpected lurch toward reality on September 13, when Amtrak president Joe Boardman agreed to move the carrier's trains from their home at Pennsylvania Station into the Farley Post Office across the street. With that, the stage was set for a new round of design work, and possibly a new dawn for the reincarnation of New York's legendary rail station.

The announcement was a sorely needed boost for the project, which has stalled in recent years in part due to the reluctance of Amtrak, which owns its current home, to move out of Penn Station and become a renter for the first time. But federal stimulus money for intercity rail made the idea seem newly feasible, and a persistent campaign from Senator Charles Schumer won Boardman over to the cause.

Still unknown at this point is whether any of the previous station designs, including Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's original 2001 version, will survive in this latest iteration. The Moynihan Station Development Corporation, which has not yet named an architect, has commissioned HOK to generate planning studies and possible designs. HOK had worked on a 2005 station plan with James Carpenter Design Associates, after the Related Companies and Vornado Realty Trust proposed an \$818 million mixed-use development scheme for the project.

For now, HOK's plans envision Amtrak's operations spanning both the original 1912 post office building and its 1934 annex, with the remainder of the program consisting of dining, retail (including potentially a big-box tenant like Target), and about 250,000 square feet for a post office. A grand main entrance would open onto 33rd Street, with two additional entrances on 8th Avenue and 32nd Street. In addition to moving Amtrak's passengers into the Farley building, proposed renovations to the existing Penn Station would widen corridors and provide a pedestrian connection to a new station underneath

2 Penn Plaza, which will house New Jersey Transit's planned Mass Transit tunnel across the Hudson.

Like many post offices of the era, the Farley was built with a low roof so managers could monitor their employees from catwalks under the trusses, said HOK principal Wayne Striker. To create a sense of grandeur reminiscent of the original Penn Station, HOK is proposing to remove the building's first floor, and is considering three options for replacing or re-using the current roof. One option would retain the existing trusses but replace their opaque cladding with glass skylights, preserving the current floor-to-ceiling height of 50 feet. A second option would retain only the east-west trusses and top them with a glass ceiling, while a third possibility would remove the current ceiling and install glass skylights suspended from new trusses at a height of about 100 feet.

The completed project would advance the City Planning Department's Hudson Yards redevelopment plan, with 32nd Street forming a pedestrian corridor that would extend into a retail arcade in the annex and then descend, via a grand stair, into the main concourse. "I think a very nice retail project could happen here, along the lines of Union Station in Washington, D.C.," said Vishaan Chakrabarti, president of the Moynihan Station Venture, a joint venture of Related and Vornado. "As Maura Moynihan said to me, when was the last time you heard anyone say, 'Let's meet for a drink at Penn Station?'"

Receiving federal stimulus funds will be critical to covering the station's estimated \$1 billion cost. "I'd say they're probably short about half the budget," said Chakrabarti. "It's very contingent on making sure the federal stimulus money comes through." However, with Amtrak now on board, and given the Obama administration's commitment to funding intercity rail, insiders are optimistic.

"I'd say our chances are highly likely," said Striker.

JULIA GALEF

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COURTESY LOUISE BRAVERMAN, ARCHITECT

Of all the Jewish institutions in New York, the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale holds one of the largest collections of Jewish art. Because Torah scrolls and other religious items are not easily displayed, Louise Braverman has designed a new museum for them within the complex's Reingold Pavilion. As with art elsewhere in the complex, the Judaica in the Derfner Museum was to be accessible above all else. To that end, Braverman created exhibition spaces where wheelchairs could navigate up to display cases for close inspection, with room for unencumbered navigation. "The sparseness and the openness give it a very contemporary feel," Braverman said. The materials are also meant to be inviting, from slate floors to the wood paneling on the display cases, one of which is circular and explicitly recalls a Torah scroll. "We want it to float and really focus you on the art and not the boxes that art is in," Braverman said. The key is the boxes themselves, especially the custom channel glass in which many of them are encased, which suffuses the space with light from windows with expansive views of the Hudson. **MC**



MONICA PIDGEON, 1913–2009

In the 1960s, there were two British magazines with an international readership: *Architectural Design* and *The Architectural Review*. The latter was rather stuffy, promoting very English ideas of modern architecture set amid picturesque townscapes. *AD*, on the other hand, grew out of the energy of a generation of architects convinced that from the carnage of World War II they could create a better world, with modernism and international cooperation as their tools.

One of that movement's essential figures was Monica Pidgeon, who edited *AD* for nearly three decades and, after having launched an ambitious multimedia archive, died on September 17 at the age of 96. I worked with Monica at *AD* from 1969 to 1974, and our

professional lives have intertwined ever since.

Monica took over as editor of the magazine in 1946, and built up a huge network of correspondents around the world. She helped organize the founding meeting of the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA) in Lausanne in 1948; she attended all the meetings of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), and latterly the meetings of Team X. She met Buckminster Fuller in 1962 and regularly published his work thereafter, inspired by Fuller's ambitious World Design Science Decade effort to make better use of global resources.

Internationalism was in her blood. Monica was born in Chile. Her father, Andre Lehman, was French, and her mother was from Scotland. At her mother's insistence the family moved to England for Monica to properly complete her education. She studied interior design at the Bartlett School of Architecture, and worked as a furniture designer before joining *AD* as assistant to the editor.

She was a facilitator rather than a writer, and leaned heavily on her technical editors. These included Theo Crosby, the curator of the influential *This Is Tomorrow* exhibition at

the Whitechapel Gallery; Ken Frampton and Robin Middleton, who both went on to be professors at Columbia University; and myself. She was also a promoter rather than a critic; she believed that if a building was no good, it was better not to publish it at all than to write a critical piece.

The economic crisis of the early 1970s decimated advertising revenue, and the Standard Catalogue Company threatened to close the magazine. Monica convinced them to keep it running on a "book" economy, covering all costs from copy sales and giving up on advertising revenue, and that's the way the magazine operates to this day. Survival was tough, however, and by 1975 Monica accepted an invitation to edit the *RIBA Journal*, staying until 1979, when I succeeded her.

Monica then started Pidgeon Audio Visual to publish slides and audiotapes in which designers talked about their work. She added to the recordings until she was in her late eighties. She then asked me to take over the project, and in 2006 work started on the digitization of the Pidgeon archive, now almost complete at www.pidgeondigital.com.

PETER MURRAY IS CHAIRMAN OF NEW LONDON ARCHITECTURE.



Desk (2009)

COURTESY RONALD FELDMAN FINE ARTS

Artist, architect, and designer Allan Wexler has long brought the thinking and strategies of an artist to bear on the richness of architectural ideas. His works are frequently exhibited here and abroad, and his solo show *Overlook* is on view at the Ronald Feldman Gallery through October 24.

Could you talk about your background and what has most influenced the kind of work you do now?

I graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1971. Because of an economic recession, some architects began to work more theoretically and conceptually. I wouldn't consider the work really anti-architecture; it was a type of meta-architecture. The strongest influence on me then was [Austrian architect] Raimund Abraham. As my teacher, he encouraged me to work on the edge. I enjoyed being a troublemaker. I wanted to become the Andy Warhol of architecture, pushing and redefining the definitions of architecture.

I work alone in my studio, where I can control the variables of a particular project. I reduce the complex issues of architecture to basic and primary ideas. Many pieces in my current exhibition at the Ronald Feldman Gallery look back at these basic principles. I feel I am reinterpreting and perhaps updating Vitruvius' *The Ten Books on Architecture* and Alberti's *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*. I title a series of manipulated digital prints/paintings/drawings *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*. Some of the basic issues explored ask how to excavate into the earth, how to float a horizontal plane or how to position a chair on a surface. I feel as if I am an architect trapped in an artist's body.

Can you expand on that?

I love the actual making of physical objects and environments. I thrive on the smell of wood, the texture of stone; I love tools. I will buy a tool and invent a project in order to justify its purchase. I need to touch, smell, saw, drill, and chisel. I need to become physically exhausted at the same rate that I become intellectually exhausted.

Did you ever want to build buildings?

Yes, but I need to be able to physically construct them myself. Many of my early works were small pavilions, sheds, and gazebos. I believe that a little building can have as much impact as a large building. The conceptual and theoretical content can be the same as a big building.

The luxury of working small is that there is less delay between idea and reality. Small buildings are inexpensive and I could take more risks. But even these relatively small buildings became cumbersome, so I began to explore the generic chair as a model for architectural ideas. I could work even more rapidly in an almost subconscious way. The chair has become an armature for many ideas over many years of work.

Have you always been drawn to construction?

In the '70s, my wife and I rented a floor-thru on Abingdon Square in the West Village and removed some of the interior walls, as "loft living" was in vogue at the time. I stockpiled the two-by-fours and began to use them to build what I called then *Temple Buildings*. I never considered them to be models for larger structures, but they had that possibility. I established rules through which I would manipulate the materials to construct these "buildings." A time limitation, a particular tool, size of lumber, an overall dimension. I was influenced by John Cage. I've always enjoyed exploring that line between the model and reality. You might look at the *Temple Buildings* and see them as proposals for buildings; at another glance, you would see them as small ritual objects.

Some of your models are done on a computer now. Do you still make handmade models?

Even the digital photography in this show is manipulated with my hands. The photographs are made as a group of 8x8 prints and are glued together with the registration marks revealed. I let the glue ooze out between the individual panels, and I use graphite to draw into the image. I want them to be handmade, constructed images, so they are ambiguously digital and physical simultaneously. They are buffed, polished, and waxed, since the surface is as important to me as its photographic content. The scars and the glue stains are intentional.

How has your work changed in the 24 years you have shown at the Feldman Gallery?

I've used the chair, the table, and the archetypal peak-roofed building for many years as a reference and as an armature for attaching ideas. I think of it as a type of tofu. You can add content to the chair or "typical" building and it picks up that particular flavor. I've always been very interested in serials and transformation. Perhaps an early interest in pursuing a career in the sciences led me to the scientific method as a means to explore architectural ideas.

I was exposed to minimalist composers like Steve Reich and artists like Sol Lewitt, who both worked in serials. With the combination of axonometric drawings of chairs and peaked-roof buildings, I could add in series a line, another line, another line, a bend, a warp, a twist, a slice, a cut, a dissection, a rearrangement, a realignment. At the show, there's a group of transformed axonometric drawings called *54 Studies for Chair Transformations*.

I am trying very hard to not introduce any new ideas to my work. I am trying to go deeper and deeper while keeping constant the same issues.

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 7, 2009



Holland's Maeslantkering storm-surge barrier, one of the largest moving structures on earth.

COURTESY DUTCH ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITIES

Recent surveys reveal that fifty percent of Americans do not believe in climate change or that it can have devastating effects on their lives. Indeed, of the many catastrophes that could come to pass in Manhattan, one of the most frightening visuals—rising water levels—has long since been co-opted by Hollywood disaster

movies such as *When Worlds Collide* (1951) and its more recent remake *Deep Impact* (1998). Until Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, the probability of severe floods seemed more alien than extraterrestrials taking over the island.

Last month, at the H2O9 Forum at Liberty Science Center in Jersey

City, that shortsightedness was a constant refrain, as was the North Sea Flood of 1953. The latter is surely the most apt historical example to illustrate how regions should not wait for actual disasters to happen before taking action. A tidal surge hit the southwest of the Netherlands—where thirty to forty percent of the

ground surface is located at least twenty feet under sea level—and killed 1,835 people.

Today, the Dutch believe floods are more likely than getting killed in car accidents, though that is actually not the case. The 1953 disaster resulted in the Delta Plan, an elaborate series of dams, sluices, locks, dikes, and storm-surge barriers that protect the region against one-in-ten-thousand-year floods. At the H2O9 forum, the Delta Plan and its revisions were compared with the systems approaches to flood protection in the Hudson Estuary Basin. Malcolm Bowman, of the State University of New York, chaired a panel with Piet Dircke of Arcadis, an international design consultancy with a focus on environmental infrastructure. Bowman explained that all five New York City boroughs “as well as the New Jersey coast are subject to mediocre flood threats.” But the region is barely equipped for calamities that can happen once in a hundred years—let alone the ten-thousand-year storms of Holland. (Katrina was a one-in-four-hundred-year storm.) “It’s time New York gets started on its own plan,” Bowman later told AN.

Although the systems put in place in Holland over the past 50 years protect the lowlands, they have also drastically changed some of its ecosystems. Dircke described how the Dutch are now preparing Delta

Plan II, a new systems approach incorporating the water system of the whole region while taking the environmental impact of barrier systems into better consideration. The assumption is that the first wall of defenses will be breached by the end of the century, and a second wall with a moat between them might provide a better solution than an attempt at rebuilding the original walls.

The lessons the Dutch have learned over four centuries of experience with their own unique landscape have positioned them well in warning other places—namely New York—about the importance of planning ahead. Although climate change is often incremental or too small for us to experience on a day-to-day basis, scientists monitoring water systems in the area do see changes that beg for immediate action. According to Bowman, considering a more regional approach is a promising start: “Rather than put levees along the Hudson River for 300 miles, why not put a barrier at the Verrazzano Narrows,” he asked. “And it doesn’t have to be all dams and concrete. Building barrier beaches has worked well in the Netherlands, too.” Bowman concluded that the challenges faced by the Dutch now will be New York’s problems in less than 100 years. “And if we aren’t more prepared then, even a little 10-year storm will do devastating damage.” **DAVID VAN DER LEER**

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the rest of the block. "They really took a risk in coming here, and that same spirit allowed us to take risks, too," said Ivan Harbour, the project's director.

The problem, RSHP quickly determined, was how to fill in the block without creating another fortresslike D.C. edifice. But what might have seemed risky at the time looks, in hindsight, like a gracefully self-evident solution. After tearing out the parking and loading spaces, the firm built a new wing of office space along the northern side of the block, forming a wide, serified V-shape. Between the serifs they placed an enormous glass facade, which continues across the roof to create a greenhouse-like atrium.

Atrium might be the wrong word. In downtown Washington, at least, typical atriums provide the bare minimum of light and air, just enough to charge higher rents, and they're almost always hidden behind stone-and-brick walls. Intended as common space, they are enjoyed by no one. At 300 New Jersey Avenue, in contrast, the center of the building isn't just open internally, but connected through the glass facade to public space outside, including the neglected Japanese-American Memorial pocket park across the street.

The central feature of RSHP's atrium is a massive, yellow steel tower—a tree, really—that rises from floor to ceiling, branching off into bridges to the new and old wings and, at the top, spreading into roof-supporting limbs. An elevator and stairs climb through its trunk, while landings reach out dramatically, creating open-air meeting rooms. This isn't the first time the firm has used treelike structural forms—they hold up the single-span roof at Heathrow's

Terminal 5, completed last year—but in this case they are more than just supports. The structure articulates movement through the building, while at the same time enlivening the ground floor of the atrium. Appropriately, the space below the tree is fit for picnics: Along part of the atrium's western side runs the firm's new cafeteria (where the mail room used to be), with seating that unfolds, cafe-style, into the central space. Taken as a

Downtown Washington, D.C., is the graveyard of great architects. Robert A.M. Stern; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; Kevin Roche; even Mies: No matter how valiantly they try, in the end their buildings are literally decorated sheds. Thanks to the city's oppressive height limitations and permissive street-wall regulations, clients push for maximum floor space and little to no accommodation for the

public sphere. The results are there for all to see—or not, since downtown's narrow canyon walls funnel the eye away from buildings. Abandon all hope, ye who design here.

Leave it to an outsider to crack the building code. Richard Rogers is well-known in the United States, but until recently he had completed just one minor project here, on an industrial site in Princeton.

Having rejuvenated his practice as Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (RSHP), however, he has landed a series of projects in New York and Washington, the first of which, D.C.'s 300 New Jersey Avenue, opened earlier this year.

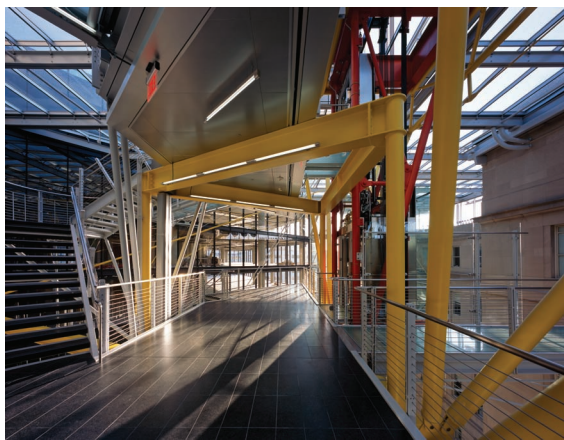
The full-block site is a doozy, with right angles at the western corners, then three acute angles on the eastern edge, where New Jersey and Louisiana

avenues meet. The result is an irregular pentagon, whose eastern and western sides were already occupied by a 1935 office building running diagonally along the east side, and a 1975 addition along the west, with the rest of the space taken up by a parking garage and loading docks.

Located just a few hundred feet from the Capitol and almost completely occupied by the law firm

Jones Day, the block is a prime address long overlooked by the city's herd-following lobbyists and lawyers, who huddle around K Street and Connecticut Avenue. Yet Jones Day split off from the pack a few years ago, moving some of its staff to the existing buildings; the firm liked its new digs so much that it decided to consolidate its entire D.C. operation. Hence the idea of expanding into

CHUCK CHOI



LEFT AND ABOVE: KATSUHISA KIDA

Facing page: The V-shaped entrance plaza gestures to a pocket park across the street. **Top:** The glazed facade brings light deep into the interior, with unhindered views from the ground floor. **Left and above:** The steel tower supports stairways and bridges to other wings of the building.

whole, the atrium is a playground for grownups.

It's the sort of office building one might expect for an ad agency or website headquarters. But a white-shoe law firm that bills by the quarter-hour? Naysayers will ask whether Jones Day can afford to let its employees meet randomly on a bridge, stepping aside for a few minutes' chat, or hold informal meetings over

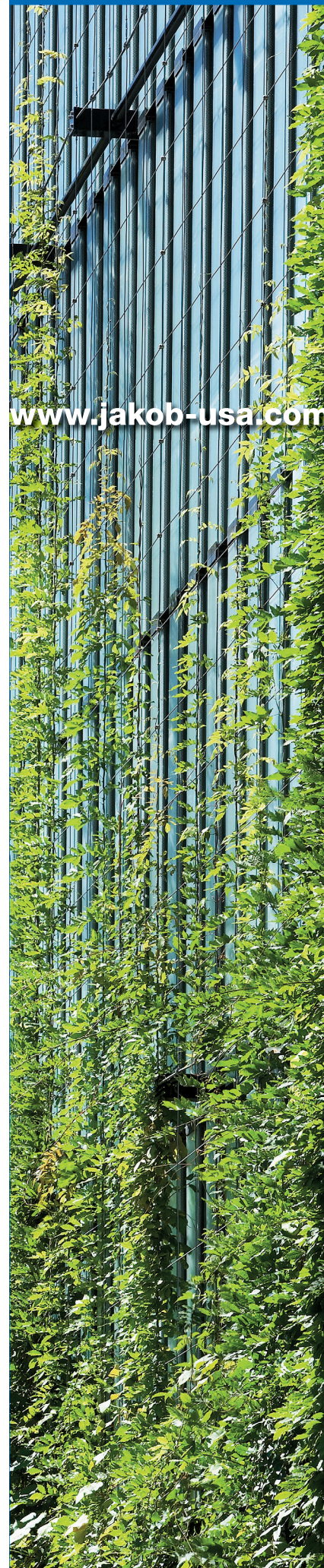
coffee like philosopher-manqués at some Left Bank coffeehouse.

"We've given them a blank canvas," said Harbour. "Now they need to learn how to use it."

Creativity and spontaneity aren't core values in the Washington legal world. To the naysayers, RSHP's response is clear: Perhaps they should be.

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Left: The design preserves the neo-Georgian facade, while adding pizzazz to a midblock passage. **Near left:** The box-office lobby transitions from the project's historic fabric to new construction.

angled mezzanine seats facing the stage, and via a broad winding staircase, red-walled restrooms dominate the middle level. These are said to be the most capacious restrooms in the industry (boasting 22 fixtures in the women's room), with a bar placed one level below to avoid cramping space. Designers also moved the dressing room under the seats, and placed the orchestra pit directly under the stage, where it sits more or less alongside ice storage. Among other benefits, these moves help the circulation plan provide for ample entrances from stage left and right.

These strategies get their first test on October 15, when John Stamos and Gina Gershon stride onto the stage, confront sloping rows of bright-red seats, and tear through Bye Bye Birdie as the kickoff for the Roundabout Theatre Company's 20-year lease of the space.

ALEC APPELBAUM

SHOWTIME continued from front page "We had the benefit of Henry Miller's writing about what made a great theater, and we wanted to preserve that typology."

Working for the civic-minded Durst Organization, which built the tower, known as One Bryant Park, designers also aspired to connect the performing arts to the broader urban experience. The most obvious link to both the past and the public was the neo-

Georgian facade, a city landmark that remained in place throughout the process of construction. The design team also placed artifacts from the old theater on the walls, while salvaged bits of the original plaster proscenium adorn the stage.

But a larger opportunity lay in the way the former space is knit into the tower complex. "Because it was part of a much larger project," Cook said, "we wanted to make sure it

would benefit from being part of One Bryant Park. We could have the midblock entrance and a really unique experience." To that end, the midblock passage features a portrait of the rakish Miller in "kinetic sequins" that enliven the entry for bank employees and lawyers who daily pass through the space, according to Keith Helmetag, a principal of C&G Partners, which worked on signage and navigation plans from the

corporate lobby and midblock loggia to the theater.

Sustainable features, the hallmark of One Bryant Park, also extend to the 1,055-seat theater's public and private spaces. "This was an opportunity for a Broadway theater to benefit from technologies developed for a larger project—stormwater capture, and energy that's about three times as efficient as the grid," Cook said. "People will feel a much higher quality of air,

with 95 percent particulate filtration." In a nod to Douglas Durst's fidelity to green demonstrations, the project, which aims for LEED Gold status, will also include carbon-dioxide sensors and what Helmetag described as a "green clock" in the midblock space charting the energy savings in the tower and other sustainability-tuned buildings around the world.

And then there are the bathrooms. Behind the

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COURTESY GOODY CLANCY

JOAN GOODY, 1936–2009

We may have crossed paths at MIT earlier, but I know Joan Goody and I met in 1970 at an extraordinary gathering, the first of its kind in Boston, for Women in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Planning (fondly dubbed WALAP). Joan was then a young partner in the firm Goody Clancy and Associates, and together with Sally Harkness at The Architects Collaborative, they were the only principals in a room of over 100 women. For those of us who dreamed about creating a practice of architecture, Goody was tangible evidence it could be done. Her participation in WALAP was no surprise, because Joan was nurtured in an environment of political activism. I recall her saying that growing up, there was always talk of The Movement—in the '50s it was the labor movement, in the '60s it was the civil rights movement, and in the '70s it was, naturally, the women's movement. Through the years since that meeting, she generously shared her experiences, joys, and frustrations with many of us.

Joan began her practice in Boston in partnership with her husband Marvin Goody, who had formed a small firm with colleague John Clancy. From the outset, their commitment to design for the public sector and particularly urban housing gained regional and national attention. When Marvin died in 1980, Joan became the firm's most visible presence, and it grew dramatically under her leadership. Joan's values, shaped by her earliest experience in New York's Ethical Culture School and

later at Cornell and Harvard Graduate School of Design, permeated her architecture. The social benefit of architecture was always uppermost in her mind, and she was famously skeptical of design that celebrated itself more than its users. While the work of her firm expanded with projects of many types around the country, her contribution to Boston was most significant. Her affordable housing projects for Boston's Tent City and Harbor Point restored a livable urbanism to damaged parts of the city. Her Student Center for Emmanuel College and Graduate Center for Simmons College were both inviting student and academic spaces, and critical elements in the campus ensemble. She excelled in historic restoration in three notable buildings by H. H. Richardson: Austin Hall and Sever Hall at Harvard, and Trinity Church. For her contributions to the profession and the city, she received the Award of Honor for lifetime achievement in 2005 from the Boston Society of Architects.

As a cultural and civic leader, Joan was well known for her breadth of knowledge, her forthrightness, and her eloquence. She served for many years as the mayoral appointee and chair of the Boston Civic Design Commission, reviewing every major building project undertaken in the city with consistent and persistent concern for the quality of life and design each would contribute. When she stepped down and recommended me for "her seat," she cautioned me to accept only

if I would speak my mind with candor as she had done. She was one of the leaders in the current effort to save Boston's City Hall, a modern landmark designed by Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects, slated for demolition or redevelopment by Boston's mayor. She was a great reader—I never could read the newspaper early enough to be ready for her morning question: "Did you see... in the Times/Globe today?"—and belonged to several discussion groups including the Saturday Club and the Tavern Club, where she led conversations both serious and light-hearted. She was dedicated to the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where she taught briefly in the 1970s, close to her classmates who included Tom Payette and Henry Wood, and served on its Visiting Committee for many years. She was always ready with suggestions for improvements large and small, including most recently the wish for the school's lecture and exhibition posters to be more graphically legible.

Joan was an elegant woman who bore a frequently mentioned resemblance to Mary Tyler Moore. She favored Italian sportswear, artisan jewelry, and shopping at Saks. She preferred public transportation to driving. She loved her homes in Maine and Gloucester, and she traveled widely. Her favorite city abroad was Paris, and she spoke French well. In 1984, she married the poet and editor Peter Davison, and became close to his children and grandchildren; they were together until his death in 2004.

The community of Boston architects is stunned and saddened by her death. She chose not to tell most of her friends and colleagues about her short and devastating illness, so that she might enjoy her life as normally as possible until its end. Not long ago, she told me that she really couldn't imagine retirement, and indeed she has not needed to. I will always remember her as a person of strong convictions, sparking intelligence, great humor, and enormous kindness. She began as a generous colleague and wise advisor and became an enduring friend.

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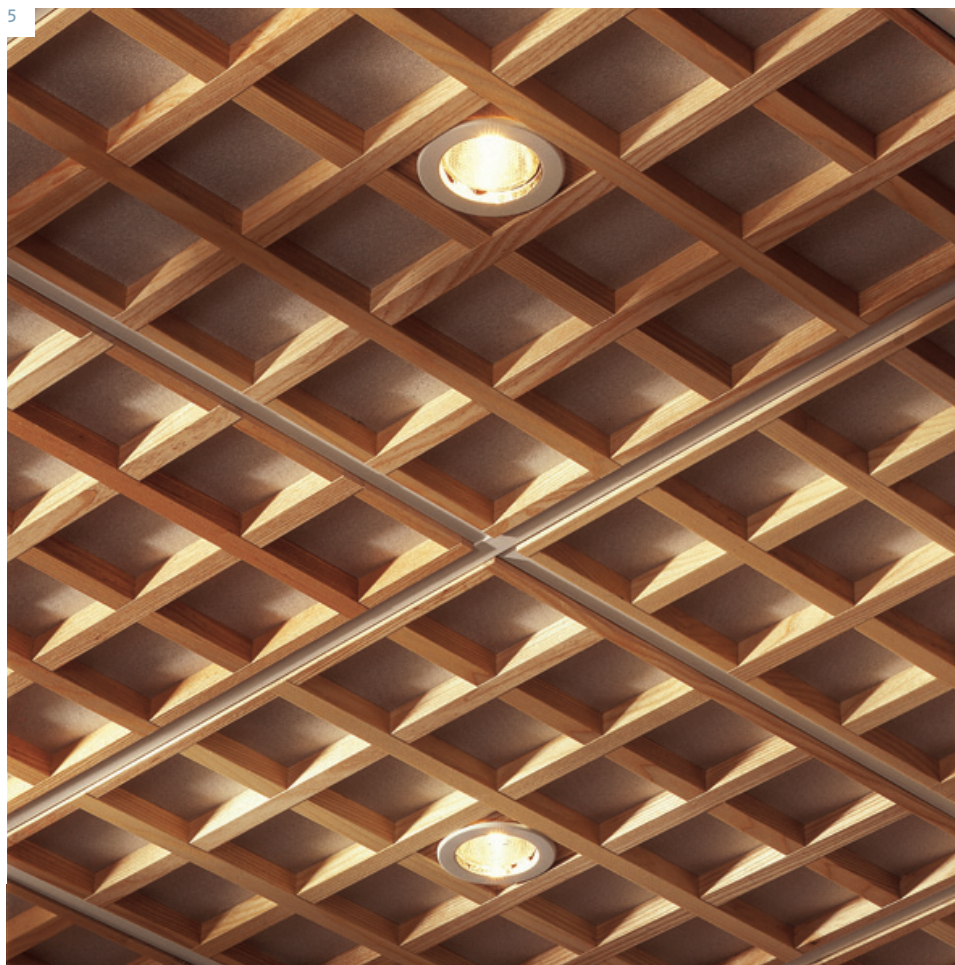
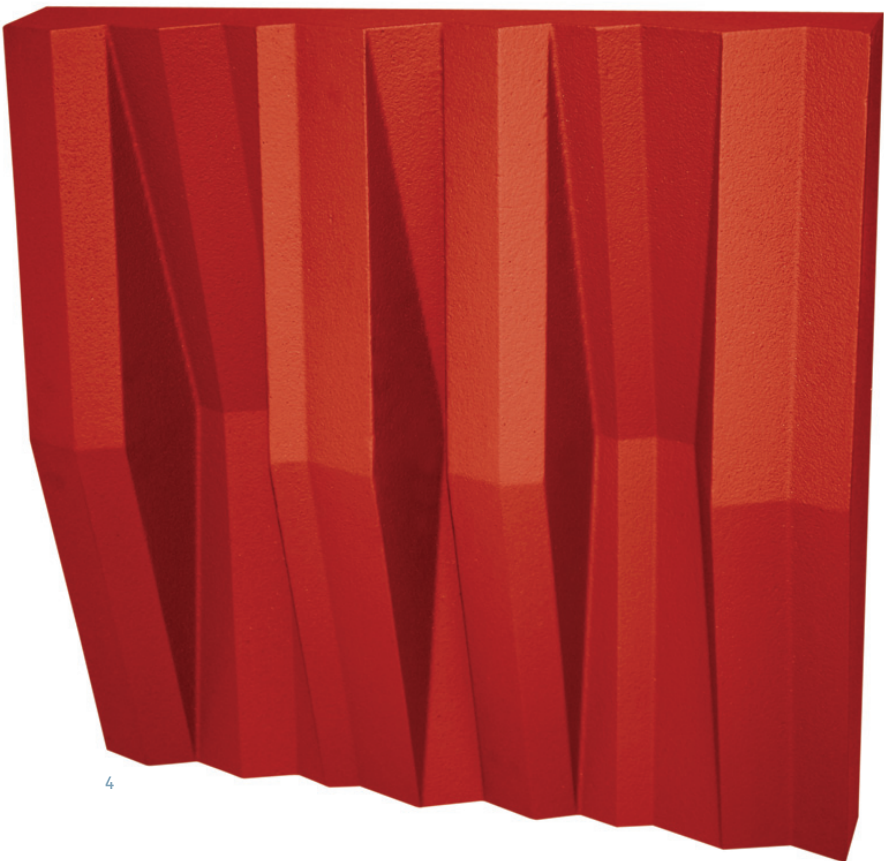
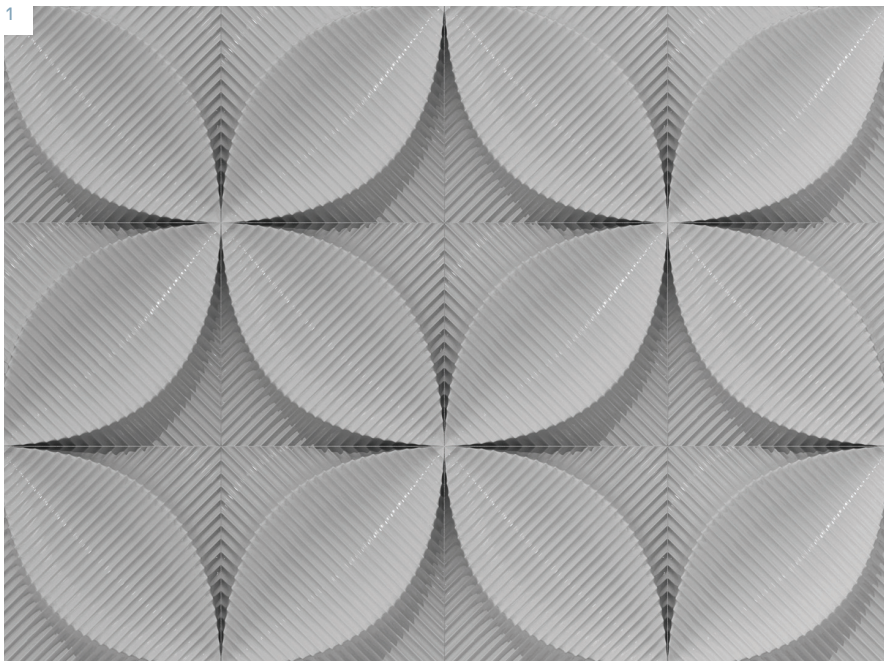
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COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS

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SOUND OFF

BY JENNIFER KRICHELS

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NEW HOME FOR POETS HOUSE ACCENTS BOTH COMMUNITY AND CALM



VICTORIA MONJO

LISTEN UP

Glancing up from poems in the library of the Poets House new space in Battery Park City, a reader can gaze through an expanse of large windows to see the rhythm of daily life in the city: workers, families, dogs, and travelers stroll by on the sidewalk below, with the green swath of Nelson Rockefeller Park and the glistening Hudson just beyond. Passersby sometimes peer back curiously, too, taking in the long row of brightly colored books on the shelves, and perhaps the reader.

This lively spirit of connection is one aspect of architect Louise Braverman's plan to create a space that's inviting to visitors from the surrounding neighborhood and beyond. The appearance of openness and transparency conveys the message: "Come on in. Poetry can be part of your life," Braverman said, a notion in keeping with the institution's inclusive philosophy. Poets House is a 24-year-old library and literacy center intended as a home for all those who read and write poetry,

regardless of their aesthetic leanings or background, and its services are free and open to the public. The name says a lot: Eschewing an apostrophe expresses the ideal of poetry as something to be shared, never owned.

Open since late September, the 11,000-square-foot space at 10 River Terrace replaces the institution's old home on Spring Street in Soho, which was half the size. When the rent there became unmanageable, Poets House began discussions with Battery Park City Authority in 2003 to relocate to its current two-story space at the base of Riverhouse, a condo building by Polshek Partnership. The following year, BPCA designated Poets House for the space, to be offered rent-free through 2069 on the condition that the organization pay for its own construction, which needed to meet the LEED Gold standard of the larger building.

Braverman, who had designed the earlier Poets House, was commissioned to design the new one, which includes ecofriendly features such as insulation made of old blue jeans, floors of beech from a sustainably managed local forest, a lighting system equipped with motion and daylight sensors, and countertops made of recycled metal chips. Polshek's design includes a glass facade with a high degree of UV protection; Braverman capitalized on its transparency by placing frequently occupied spaces—a 50,000+ volume library, a lobby, an auditorium—nearby to provide plentiful daylighting and advertise the institution's services to the outside world.

One of Braverman's most striking gestures is a polygonal glass exhibition space that echoes the transparency of the nearby facade.

Nicknamed "the egg," it cantilevers over the lobby, seeming to float in its surroundings, especially when illuminated at night.

Having once designed a poetry installation for bustling Grand Central Terminal, Braverman was keenly aware that she needed to counterbalance the transparency of Poets House with elements that foster a sense of intimacy. "The poetic environment, I think, has to be a kind of place where you can feel the stillness of the moment," she explained. "You can become immersed in the space, and hopefully [it will] have some kind of a transformative effect on you."

Inspired by the lighting in Istanbul mosques, she included an array of delicate raindrop-shaped LED lights hanging down from the underside of the exhibition room, to help bring a human scale to the lofty double-height entry space and a children's room beyond. A gently curved stairway leads up in a "slow procession" to the upper floor, where visitors encounter the exhibition space, a small reading room, and the narrow library, which is the length of a city block.

Even before the new space opened, it drew curious attention from passersby, proving its potential as a place where people could "bump into poetry," said Poets House spokesperson Suzanne Wise. This intense sense of connection to the wider community is bound to increase even further when Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates' adjacent Teardrop Park South is ready for use in spring 2010, expanding the borders of an indoor auditorium space by providing a rocky outdoor amphitheater where poets' words can project out beyond the borders of the Poets House walls. **LISA DELGADO**

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 7, 2009



**FOSTER +
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It has been about a decade since the Bowery could really be called gritty, but to this day every luxury condo, hotel, or museum that opens on the once-blighted corridor makes

some reference to this seedy past. The Sperone Westwater Gallery is the latest of these perfumed dandies parading in hobo clothing. Now rising one block north of the New Museum, this contemporary art dealership—which got its start on Greene Street in the early 1970s before moving to the Meatpacking District—will feature a “tough” canopy of blackened steel with expressed columns of the same mate-

rial along the elevation. All ruggedness ends there. Designed by Foster + Partners with structural and mechanical engineering by Buro Happold and construction management by Sciame, the gallery's new home is entirely high-design, concealing the intricate workings of a Swiss watch behind a burly exterior and pristine, white-box galleries. The root of the project's complexity is its site. Resting on a narrow plot 25

feet wide and 110 feet deep, the building fully exploits the parcel's zoning, fitting nine stories within its 140-foot height. Under current building code, the structure is considered a highrise and thus required to include the same security contingencies of any tall building designed in the post-9/11 era, such as two hardened egress stairs, emergency power generation, and a fire-resistant structure. Combine these with a museum-quality climate-control system and the other guts of the building, and you might wonder how any room is left over for functional space. The first step was selecting a concrete structure, which saved space by obviating the need for additional fireproofing. Still, the designers had to fight for every inch, packing the building's vitals into as small an envelope as possible. To help coordinate the process, Sciame ran drawings through a clash-detection software called Ziggurat, which catches conflicts between the building's systems before construction begins.

Foster used these constraints as a guide around which to arrange programmatic elements. For example, zoning requires a setback after 85 feet, creating two clearly demarcated volumes along the elevation. In the first volume, the architects arranged five floors of galleries, the first three open to the public and the top two by invitation only. The upper volume houses three floors of support spaces, including administrative offices, dedicated offices for the owners—Gian Enzo Sperone and Angela Westwater—and a library. The ninth floor is a mechanical penthouse. In the plan of the gallery floors, the architects pushed the vertical circulation elements, including the two stairs and an elevator,

as well as the mechanical shaft, to the front and back of the site, opening up a large central space approximately 20 by 30 feet for the display of artwork.

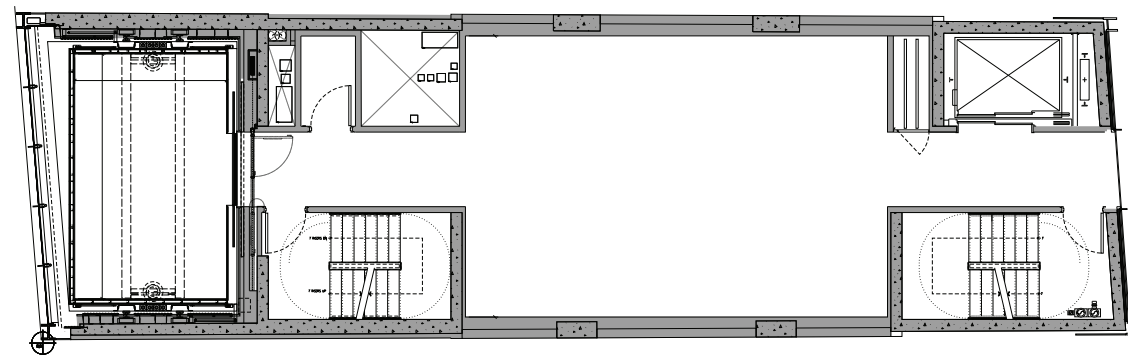
Galleries are generally wide open spaces on one floor. Sperone Westwater, however, more like the city's art institutions, is a vertical gallery, with the problem of creating easy circulation through all of the public floors. Foster solved this dilemma with what the firm calls the “moving hall,” a gallery room that both displays art and serves as an elevator ferrying passengers between the second and fifth floors. In addition to moving people, it can also be parked at a given floor to provide extra space for a large exhibition.

At 14 by 22 feet, it is one big lift. City code sets elevator capacity standards per square foot, and the moving hall had to be built to carry 30,000 pounds, the combined weight of three full-grown male elephants. Located at the street facade, it rises and falls slowly on two stainless-steel hydraulic pistons, creating a shifting ceiling for the entry lobby that can be as

little as 16 feet high or as many as 60. Since they are exposed, the shaft, pistons, and elevator undercarriage were all given the same amount of attention to detail as you would give a fine-finish interior.

Foster took full advantage of the potential of this floating room to animate the facade, coloring it Ferrari red and setting it behind a curtain wall of milled glass that will give the elevator a frosty, distorted look. The glass, which comes from a Canadian company called Barber, was fabricated into a panelized system by Permasteelisa, laminated to a tempered piece of glass and then set in thin frames that will be bolted to a stainless-steel support system. The wall's vertical mullions are expressed with stainless-steel fins, while the horizontal framing ties into a steel plate within the shaft that offers lateral stabilization against wind loads. At night, white LEDs at the top and bottom of the elevator will help to track its movement, making one thing perfectly clear: The Bowery's newest building is anything but a flop house.

AARON SEWARD



COURTESY FOSTER + PARTNERS

STATEN ISLAND BASE SET TO BECOME SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY



COURTESY NYEDC

Welcome Homeport

Staten Island is not exactly known as New York City's most sustainable borough, but the largest development in the island's history will soon get underway, replacing part of a former naval base with the first project in the city to take part in the U.S. Green Building Council's new LEED for Neighborhoods program.

On September 16, city officials announced a deal with New Jersey developer Ironstate Development to create a seven-acre, 800-unit housing complex at the former Homeport Naval Base on Staten Island's north shore. As the latest step in more than a decade of slowly churning redevelopment plans for the area, the project aims at reconnecting locals with the waterfront and encouraging smart growth in an area not known for it.

"We often refer to the north shore of Staten Island as the Gold Coast," State Senator Diane Savino said at a press conference announcing the deal. "If that's the case, then Homeport is the crown jewel."

Once home to Cornelius Vanderbilt's first ferry service, the north shore neighborhood of Stapleton fell by the wayside after the opening of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge in the 1960s, which cut it off from much of the rest of the island. President Ronald Reagan tried to reverse the trend by proposing the Homeport Naval Base, a complex with one 1,410-foot pier, to serve a small number

of naval ships. Homeport opened in 1990, but was closed four years later by the Clinton administration. In 1995, ownership reverted to the city, which has grappled with plans for the site ever since.

The Bloomberg administration launched a task force in 2004 charged with reviving the area, after Giuliani-era efforts had stalled, which led to a 2006 rezoning. The following year, the city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) released three RFPs, one each for residential, hotel, and recreational complexes. Officials said there had been healthy interest in the 35-acre area as recently as last year, with projects pending up until the financial markets collapsed. "That's the problem with these rezonings, they take time," Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said at the press conference. "But now we're ready to move forward with a great developer."

Meanwhile, the EDC has worked with WRT, Marpillero Pollak Architects, and Leni Schwendinger Light Projects on waterfront open space and infrastructure improvements for the redevelopment area. Along with the announcement of Ironstate's involvement, the agency announced a \$33 million commitment to the first phase of those improvements. (These aspects of the project had first been announced in 2004, with a budget of \$66 million, but due to the staged nature of the devel-

opment and budget constraints, the improvements will be completed in phases.)

Ironstate president David Barry said he intends to break ground on the firm's \$150 million development by 2011, after necessary infrastructure work and the relocation of some of Homeport's current tenants, including parking and storage for city agencies and some county courts. The Hoboken-based developer has numerous projects in Hoboken as well as in Jersey City, Bayonne, and on the Jersey Shore, many of which reuse industrial sites not unlike Homeport, the developer's first New York City project.

Final designs by Central Jersey-based Minno & Wasko are still being developed, but the roughly 800 rental apartments will rise in two contextual blocks no taller than the currently allowed 60 feet. There will be 30,000 feet of ground-floor retail, aimed at creating a more urban feel and capitalizing on the waterfront appeal. In addition to LEED for Neighborhoods, the buildings themselves will pursue green standards. With rental stock on Staten Island limited, the developers hope to attract younger tenants and retain those who have fled the island in the past. One of the key selling points is a nearby subway station only three stops from the Staten Island ferry.

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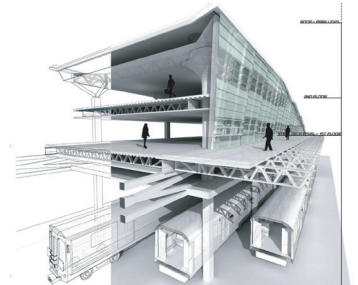
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 7, 2009



The Center Building (1852) at St. Elizabeths, designed by Architect of the Capitol Thomas U. Walter.

COURTESY NATIONAL PHOTO COMPANY COLLECTION

MENTAL STATE continued from front page million design-build contract to HOK and Clark Design Build for the first phase of construction on the site of a new 1.18 million-square-foot Coast Guard headquarters designed by Perkins + Will. The overall project, which will include 6.2 million square feet of historic preservation and adaptive reuse as well as new building, has been a cause of concern for preservationists who feel that Homeland Security's particular needs will destroy the landmark.

Sited on a bluff in Anacostia overlooking central D.C., St. Elizabeths was established

by Congress in 1852. Though it once housed as many as 7,000 patients, including inmates such as Ezra Pound and John Hinckley, Jr., the facility's relevancy diminished along with the decline in popularity of large mental institutions. By 2002, the hospital had moved its remaining residents to its smaller east campus, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) put the site with its extensive ornamental landscape on its list of 11 most endangered places. In 2004 the GSA took control of the west campus, invested \$15 million for emergency repairs to save the historic buildings from demolition due

to neglect, and began looking for an appropriate tenant. Homeland Security, then looking for a location to house 14,000 workers currently spread throughout 33 offices in the area, seemed to fit the bill. Not only did the site, the largest federally owned tract of land in D.C., promise enough space for its vast operations, but the campus already provided the 100-foot setbacks required by post-9/11 mandates for high-security agencies.

"We couldn't find any other federal need for St. Elizabeths," explained Les Shepherd, head architect of the GSA. He also pointed out that no private developer would touch the site because of the massive scale of its revitalization needs, which could cost as much as \$3 billion, combined with the constraints of working within an historic landmark.

But not everyone feels that DHS and St. Elizabeths are a perfect match, and in spite of a three-year review process that has seen many adjustments to appease preservationists, concerns persist. "They started with 6.2 million square feet and they're still at that number," said Rebecca Miller, executive director of the D.C. Preservation League. "Our position is that the mass of development is going to destroy the landmark," she continued. "DHS should find another location for consolidation."

Nell Ziehl, program officer for the NTHP, seconded that opinion. "We were happy that the GSA wanted to take over the site, but DHS is incompatible. They're going to cordon it off. We think it should be accessible for all Americans," she said.

While all of the existing buildings are required to go through the National Historic

Preservation Act Section 106 process, which requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their activities on historic properties, the new Coast Guard headquarters, scheduled for occupancy by 2013, is particularly troubling to preservationists. In its current design, the facility's ten floors step down the slope of the bluff overlooking the Anacostia River. Though many alterations have been made to sink it further into the hillside, break up the mass with courtyards, cover it with green roofs, and otherwise disguise it with green screens, the massive building and its parking garage will undeniably make a visual impact on the landscape. "The site was always part of the green backdrop of D.C. as conceived in the McMillan plan," said Ziehl, referring to the ambitious urban development plan of 1901. "The Coast Guard building will disrupt the monumental setting of the center of the city."

The Commission of Fine Arts approved the Coast Guard headquarters and DHS consolidation in 2008, but the project has yet to clear every hurdle that stands between it and the commencement of construction. To handle the expected increase in traffic, the GSA wants to add a new access road off of Interstate 295, a passage that will take it through National Park Service land. "The Parks Service has prevented them from seizing the parkland," said Ziehl. "We understand that DHS and GSA and the Federal Highway Administration and Parks have all been having meetings to work out a compromise, but the National Planning Commission has made it clear: The project cannot move forward unless the access road issue is resolved." **AS**



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AT DEADLINE

PAINT IT WHITE

Given the expense and complexity of green roofs, the Bloomberg administration has championed white roofs as an alternative. On September 24, the mayor, along with Al Gore, launched a pilot program to paint some 100,000 square feet of industrial roofs in Long Island City over a two-week period, with the help of the city's new volunteer program. The neighborhood was chosen because its expansive roofs make it easier to paint, but also make it one of the hotter areas of the city. Depending on the success of the pilot, the program could expand to other parts of New York.

FROM INSTITUTE TO INSTITUTION

Now with the largest architecture and design galleries in the country, the Art Institute of Chicago is beefing up staff to oversee its Renzo Piano-designed digs. On September 22, the museum announced that it has added a third curator to the art and design department, naming Alison Fisher as an assistant curator with a focus on historic collections. Fisher previously served as a curatorial fellow at the Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, and joins department chair Joseph Rosa and curator Zoe Ryan, who has been building the department's contemporary design collection.

NEW LIFE FOR NEWTOWN?

Newtown Creek runs more or less straight through the largest oil spill in American history, so it may come as a surprise that the waterway that divides Queens and Brooklyn has yet to make the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund list. On September 23, the agency moved to rectify that, recommending the creek for the list. Now testing will commence to figure out who should pay for clean-up. While the Bloomberg administration has not taken a strict position on the matter, it could lean toward opposing designation, as it has along the Gowanus Canal, where the perceived stigma of Superfund status is believed to threaten development.

REM EARNS COMMONWEAL

British planning authorities have green-lighted a new home for London's Design Museum, to rise from the shell of the historic Commonwealth Institute on Holland Park and Kensington High Street. Preservationists had looked askance at designs by Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, but English Heritage has now backed the project following design revisions, according to *BD*. Known as the Parabola, the competition-winning proposal will make significant alterations to the Institute property, designed in 1962 by RMJM.

LPC PONDER'S PLANS TO DEMOLISH CAST-IRON BUILDING

SCRAPPING SOHO?

"Someone has stolen my building!"

So declared Beverley Moss Spratt, the former chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, in a 1974 front page story in the *Times* upon learning that what remained of the facade of the first cast-iron building ever constructed in the city had been stolen from a lot on Chambers Street and sold for scrap. The episode haunts the commission, which is why it approached 74 Grand Street so cautiously during a September 22 hearing.

In 2004, excavation work was underway at neighboring 72 Grand Street, on the corner of Wooster Street. According to neighbors, the work was far from adequate, especially given the area's silty soil. Then it rained for almost two weeks. The foundation at 74 Grand buckled. The five-story loft building slid a full 13.5 inches out of alignment, leading to emergency shoring and evacuation. It has sat vacant ever since. But it continues to stir.

Over the past five years, 74 Grand has continued to settle, now overhanging the adjacent lot by about two feet. And it has begun to bring much of the block with it, pulling a one-story building at 76 Grand more than a foot out of alignment, while another loft building at 78 Grand has shifted up to 7 inches, with similar concerns now mounting at 80 Grand.

On September 8, the Department of

Buildings determined that 74 Grand must now be demolished, but because it is located in the Soho Cast Iron Historic District, the demolition must be approved by the commission.

Furthermore, the owners of 74 Grand are responsible for the work, but the cooperative of owners that were forced out of the building want nothing to do with it any longer, so there are as yet no plans for the building's reconstruction. Instead, the owners want to demolish the building and store the facade until it can be sold to someone else and the site rebuilt.

But both the storage and the sale worry the preservation commission. "I'm not opposed to demolition, I believe it is unavoidable," Commissioner Fred Bland said. "My point is storage. It's got to be protected." Some commissioners debated putting a lien on the property or creating stiff fines to ensure that nothing happens to the facade, and to make it clear to the next owner that the commission expects the building to be rebuilt as is.

Another issue raised by the neighbors is that the demolition of 74 Grand presents an enticing development opportunity, because two vacant lots will sit next to the nondescript building at 76 Grand. "We want to make sure this facade isn't patched into some monstrosity," Stella Sands of 78 Grand, told the commission.

And then there is the issue of ensuring that the demolition of 74 Grand does not further the collapse of its neighbors. Though no definitive plan has been devised, the commission's counsel said the owners of 74 Grand have agreed to safe storage and demolition, which would be paid for with the proceeds from a pending settlement with 72 Grand. Still, some commissioners remained unconvinced, with the demolition approved by a vote of 6-3. **MC**

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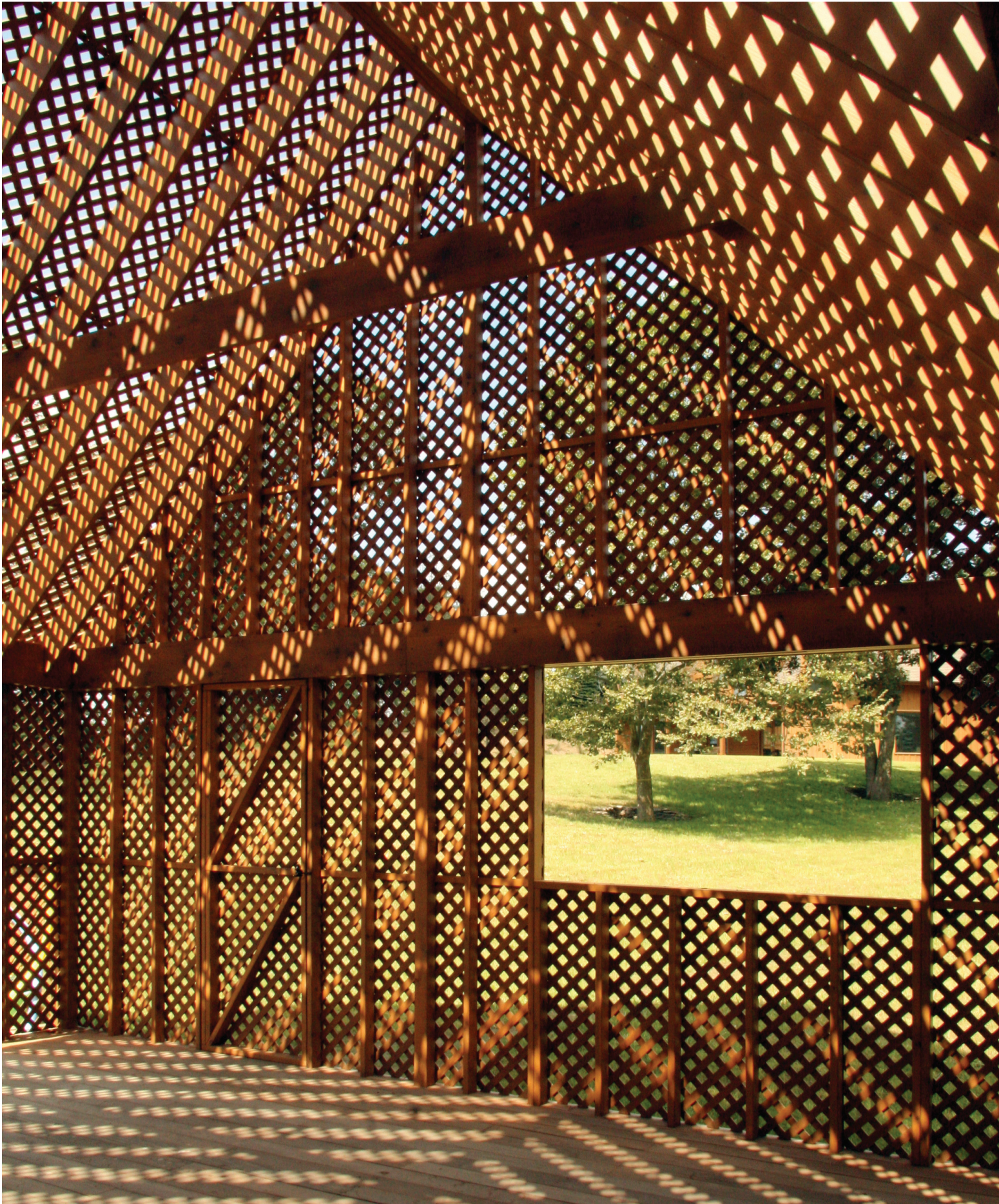
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COURTESY OBRA ARCHITECTS

Centrifugal House

Southampton
OBRA Architects

Left: A shade pavilion attached to the pool house made entirely of cedar garden lattice reinforces the idea of each building's integrity as an object.

Right, top: Board and batten siding plus gables respond to the client's demand for a sense of the vernacular, but their articulation is sleekly modern.

Right, middle: A porch carved out of the facade is angled toward views of a neighboring agricultural reserve.

Right, bottom: An exaggerated roof and gables in matching cedar minimize the impact of the 8,000-square-foot house.



Home Range

Freely adapting from the languages of vernacular, art, and modernism, three new houses achieve a contemporary sophistication, where visual stimulation and creature comforts both settle in with ease.

By Alexandra Lange



Above: Highly composed shafts of light on staircases, in hallways, and framing views add complexity and richness to a simple interior.

Context is not always fixed, and not always what you expect. A West Village carriage house that's had the same view since the Civil War may get ultra-2009 neighbors in the space of a year. Shelter Island, often thought of as an enclave of traditional architecture, has waterfront streets where some houses were built in 1970, not 1870. And the Hamptons? Shingle Style is open to a wealth of interpretations.

These three houses, all completed within the last year, and all by up-and-coming New York City partnerships, treat their respective contexts with respect but preserve a questing spirit. There's no blank-slate modernism—Christoff:Finio hoped to save the historic back facade of the burnt-out carriage house before adjacent construction did it in—but also no maintaining-property-values historicism. None of the architects want to admit a regard for the vernacular, but it creeps through in more abstract ways. There's a utilitarian aspect to the carriage house befitting its historic supporting role. Both East End manses have the square footage and wood siding of the typical spec house. But their plans twist and turn to make the most of their physical context, the landscape.

"They told us, 'We want you to work in the vernacular language of houses in Southampton, the Shingle Style, maybe Shaker architecture,'"

Pablo Castro of OBRA Architects said of his Centrifugal House clients: an investment banker and a film editor. "It was an uncomfortable moment for us. We're always trying to run away from the idea of style." The architects were given a program that kept growing and a budget that was static. While the clients had started small, they soon realized that for resale, the house had to maximize the potential of its five-acre lot. They ended up with seven bedrooms, a four-car garage, and 8,000 total square feet.

Castro and partner Jennifer Lee turned to an early idea they had for the site, "the excluded middle," a court between house and guest-house that would channel views toward a neighboring agricultural reserve. They mashed this up with the narrow gabled communal houses of the Shakers and the oversize shingles of a Robert A.M. Stern, cranking the bar into the shape of "a donut somebody had taken a bite out of," said Castro. "We still liked the idea of a vacant place where anything can happen. The house surrounds a void and spins out"—the centrifugal force—"toward the view."

The clients liked everything but the curve, so the donut became faceted, with oversize dormers breaking the difficult geometries of the roof (and, to my eye, referring to the "vernacular" of the Venturis). Because of the budget, interiors

had to be kept simple, but you catch a glimpse of the Shaker in the play of light on the white walls of the long, turning hall upstairs. The odd angles and extra planes created by the insertion of the dormers increase the possibilities for such effects, and the corridor, which hides the next door or window around each turn, is full of surprises rather than a long march. The house also has three custom soapstone fireplaces, hearths that add another geometry and focus to rooms that stray from the rectilinear.

Outside, OBRA Architects returned to shingles in search of a single material for roof and cladding (copper was their dream, but too expensive). "We wanted one material, one surface to give it integrity as an object," Castro said. They ultimately chose cedar, board, and batten for the vertical walls, and shingles for the roof. Cedar was also used for the pool house, a double set of right-angle barn-like buildings, one solid, one roofed and sided in off-the-shelf garden lattice. Castro jokes that it is a "freckle machine," but it's also another twist on the requested traditional Hamptons architecture.

While suburban style has become fairly common on Shelter Island, you can tell from the street that the one thing the YN-13 House (pictured on pages 28 and 29) is not is a cookie-cutter, shingles-on-

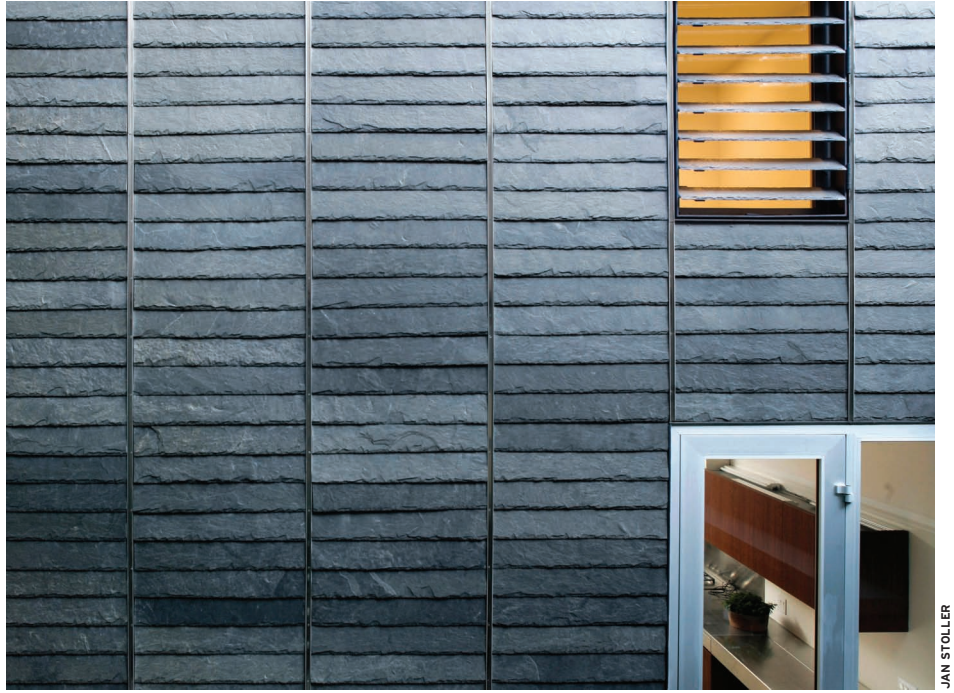
steroids McMansion. If that's context, Michael Morris and Yoshiko Sato of Morris Sato Studio want nothing to do with it. The houses across the street from their two-acre Shelter Island site are the ambitious architecture of an earlier era—Norman Jaffe's 1972 three-house development, in which one is Corbusian, one Wrightian, and one has the overscaled shingle roof that came to be Jaffe's own calling card. "That's the one we like the best," Morris said. For their own site, on which they are constructing two 6,000-square-foot spec houses, "we decided to make contemporary forms of our choosing, and to have them fuse into the local ecology by being part of that fabric."

Boulders unearthed on the site will become retaining walls, and the windows that pop and pock the bleached cedar siding are oriented toward particular points of view and times of day. "In the center, we have a large cut in the volume, so what would be the darkest part of the house has direct sunlight coming in," Sato explained. The four corners of the main floor all have doors that slide open (an oblique reference to Japanese shoji screens), allowing the landscape in and natural convection to cool the house. "That is a reference to vernacular buildings. There are systems that are useful to understand from the past, rather than

stylistic ideas," Morris said. The floors, made of Kota Brown limestone, will also retain and radiate heat, with their cleft surface suggesting a rougher natural terrain and a certain 1970s *au naturel* aesthetic.

Like the sliding doors, the vernacular Morris and Sato reference is Japanese. The exterior siding is an adaptation of the *shitami-bari* used on traditional urban houses in Kyoto and Kanazawa, which Sato translates as "downward-facing boards." The horizontal cladding combines with vertical strips, allowing Morris and Sato to integrate the module on the house's facade with that of the standing seams on the turncoat stainless steel roof. Rather than looking like a gable, the pitched roof folds down into the house on some sides, creating the illusion of Cubist-inspired flattening. YN-13's closest neighbor will be their so-called Soula House, which serves as a gateway in the way they have developed the land, bringing the houses closer together and leaving the rest of the site untouched. "There's a critique of individual houses centered on one-acre lots," Morris said. "We imagine the site as a proto-urban thing, the buildings working together."

Christoff:Finio's carriage house is another exemplary object within its landscape, though a minimum urban dwelling with a footprint of 20 feet by 20 feet and two floors.



JAN STOLLER

Carriage House

Greenwich Village
Christoff:Finio Architecture

Above and right, below: Interiors for the two-story rental are simply outfitted.
Above, right: The rear facade is clad in eight-foot-long slate shingles.
Below: The street-level glass wall is protected by a screen of twisted steel ribs.



The architects even shaved a little more off that miniscule square footage to create an “urban garage,” a sliver of space behind a screen of flat steel ribs, each twisted 90 degrees, to provide a useful landing strip for bikes, bags, and garbage, and also a zone of privacy for a front door that originally opened directly onto Charles Lane.

The carriage house is owned by photographer Jan Stoller, who lives and works in an 1860 townhouse on Charles Street that now neighbors Richard Meier’s third glassy residential tower and Asymptote’s first. Christoff:Finio had designed a penthouse and terrace for Stoller to preserve his view once the Meier building was underway, so when the carriage house was gutted by fire, Stoller asked them to build a two-bedroom rental unit between the existing party walls. As he now had a terrace, he no longer needed the 12-foot sliver of backyard, which was turned into part of the architects’ brief for the rental.

“What was fun for us was designing this tiny little house, but making it feel bigger,” said Martin Finio. “We took the terrazzo-ground concrete on the first floor and extended it out into the yard.” The wall-mounted kitchen also runs seamlessly from indoors to out, with teak cabinets and stainless-steel countertops. The windows are



YN-13 House

Shelter Island
Morris Sato Studio

Above: The architects wanted to give a sense of density to the buildings on the site, allowing most of it to remain open.

Below: Windows pop and all four corners of the house have doors that slide open like Japanese shoji screens.

Facing page, left and right:

The bleached cedar siding of the house “fuses into the local ecology,” which includes a 1972 house by Norman Jaffe, while deep cuts bring light and breezes into the interior.





COURTESY MORRIS SATO STUDIO

big, but for the sake of privacy (as much for landlord as for tenants), they start at the floor and extend up only four feet. The back wall is covered in unusually long slate shingles (more typically used for roofing), three feet by eight feet, which turn into operable louvers for the upstairs bedroom windows. The wall is really only visible from Stoller's townhouse, and Christoff:Finio wanted to give him something interesting to look at, as well as refer to the clapboard siding more typical on a small house. "When you get direct sun on it, the cleft edge picks up light like a line drawing," Finio said. Since it was to be a rental, the interiors are sturdily generic: white walls, white bathroom, gray tile.

"What's the vernacular of New York City?" Finio asked. "It's always frothing and rebuilding. When we started building this project, we had this large glass opening on the front facade at the second level looking out at a brick warehouse. That came down, and Asymptote's glass started up." In other words, neighborhoods can change, tastes can change, and so can architectural context. Curtains are forever.

ALEXANDRA LANGE IS A JOURNALIST, ARCHITECTURE HISTORIAN, AND TEACHER BASED IN BROOKLYN.

OCTOBER

THURSDAY 8
LECTURES

Martin Puryear, Jem Cohen, John Gossage, and Kristen Hileman
Remembering Things Past: A Conversation Celebrating Anne Truitt
7:00 p.m.
Hirshhorn Museum
Independence Ave. and 7th St., Washington, D.C.
www.hirshhorn.si.edu

Tom Darden
Make it Right: From Concept to Community
9:00 a.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

Michael C. Kathrens
Newport Villas: The Revival Styles 1885–1935
6:30 p.m.
Institute of Classical Architecture
20 West 44th St.
www.classicist.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Jack Pierson
Abstracts
Cheim & Read
547 West 25th St.
www.cheimread.com

FRIDAY 9
LECTURE

Joo Youn Paek and David Jimison
Happy Hour Project
Presentation: Too Smart City
7:00 p.m.
The Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.archleague.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Serizawa Keisuke
Serizawa: Master of Japanese Textile Design
Japan Society
333 East 47th St.
www.japansociety.org

Joel Meyerowitz
Legacy: The Preservation of Wilderness in New York City Parks
Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

Kitty Kraus
Intervals
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
1071 5th Ave.
www.guggenheim.org

SATURDAY 10
EVENT

Mark Making
2:00 p.m.
ADC Gallery
106 West 29th St.
www.adcglobal.org

WITH THE KIDS
Festival of the Building Arts
10:00 a.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

SUNDAY 11
EXHIBITION OPENING

Jasper Johns
Editions with Additions: Working Proofs by Jasper Johns
National Gallery of Art
National Mall and 3rd St.
Washington, D.C.
www.nga.gov

MONDAY 12
LECTURE

Alfredo Brillembourg, Hubert Klumpner, Margaret Crawford, Teddy Cruz, and Christian Werthmann
Ecogram II: Invisible Cities—Innovation and Complexity in Informal Settlements
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
American Stories: Paintings of Everyday Life, 1765–1915
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

TUESDAY 13
LECTURES

Ann Bittenwieser
Governor's Island: Jewel of the Harbor
6:30 p.m.
The Municipal Art Society of New York
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

Richard Greenwald
Longshoremen & Dockyard Labor in Postwar New York
6:30 p.m.
General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen
20 West 44th St.
www.generalsociety.org

WEDNESDAY 14
LECTURE

Kriota Willberg
Under the Influence of Busby Berkeley
6:30 p.m.
Institute of Contemporary Art
118 South 36th St.
Philadelphia
www.icaphila.org

EVENT

First Annual MAD Paperball
6:00 p.m.
Museum of Arts and Design
2 Columbus Circle
www.madmuseum.org

THURSDAY 15
LECTURES

Loretta Hall
Building for the 21st Century: Conserving Energy by Using the Earth Itself
12:30 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

Ellen Dunham-Jones
Retrofitting Suburbia
6:00 p.m.
University of Pennsylvania School of Design
B1 Meyerson Hall
Philadelphia
www.design.upenn.edu

Vishaka Desai
The Role of Museums in 21st-Century Asia
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Justine Kurland
This Train is Bound for Glory
Mitchell-Innes & Nash
534 West 26th St.
www.miandn.com

Barbara Sandler
Shooting Stars
Pavel Zoubok
533 West 23rd St.
www.pavelzoubok.com

Activism, Art, and the AIDS Crisis, 1987–1993
Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts
24 Quincy St., Cambridge
www.ves.fas.harvard.edu

FRIDAY 16
LECTURE

David Benjamin, Natalie Jeremijenko, and Soo-in Yang
Amphibious Architecture
7:00 p.m.
The Urban Center
457 Madison Avenue
www.archleague.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Andy Harper
Recent Paintings and Works on Paper
Danese
535 West 24th St.
www.danese.com

Lee Mingwei
The Mending Project
Lombard-Freid Projects
531 West 26th St.
www.lombard-freid.com

Design USA: Contemporary Innovation
Cooper-Hewitt,
National Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
www.cooperhewitt.org

SATURDAY 17
LECTURE

Jonathan Conlin, Maygene Daniels, and Peggy Parsons
Celebrating “Civilisation”
12:30 p.m.
National Gallery of Art
National Mall and 3rd St.
Washington, D.C.
www.nga.gov

EVENTS

Printmaking
2:00 p.m.
ADC Gallery
106 West 29th St.
www.adcglobal.org

2nd Annual Saturday Night Party: Underground Up
8:00 p.m.
Art in General
87 Lafayette St.
www.artingeneral.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
House of Cars: Innovation and the Parking Garage
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

Bharti Kher, Yayoi Kusama, Eva Rothschild, and Mindy Shapero
Marianne Boesky Gallery
535 West 22nd St.
www.marianneboeskygallery.com

SUNDAY 18
EXHIBITION OPENING
Bold, Cautious, True: Walt Whitman and American Art of the Civil War Era
Katonah Museum of Art
134 Jay St., Katonah
www.katonahmuseum.org

MONDAY 19
LECTURES
Dan Dorell, Lina Ghotmeh, Adelaide Marchi, et al.
Architectes d’Aujourd’hui: Young Practices in France
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

Andrew Freear
Rural Studio
7:00 p.m.
Cooper Union Great Hall
7 East 7th St.
www.archleague.org

TUESDAY 20
EXHIBITION OPENING
Siah Armajani
Murder in Tehran
Max Protetch
511 West 22nd St.
www.maxprotetch.com

EVENT
MillionTreesNYC
6:30 p.m.
Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

LECTURES
Charles Renfro
Tasty Landscapes and Other Environmental Experiments
6:30 p.m.
Friends Seminary
222 East 16th St.
www.aiany.org

David Owen, Gary Brewer, Paul Stoller, and James Howard Kunstler
Manhattan: The Greenest Place in America
8:00 p.m.
National Arts Club
15 Gramercy Park South
www.aiany.org

James Barron, Joseph Berger, Sewell Chan, et al.
The New York Times Book of New York: Stories of the People, the Streets, and the Life of the City Past and Present
6:30 p.m.
Lower East Side Tenement Museum
108 Orchard St.
www.tenement.org

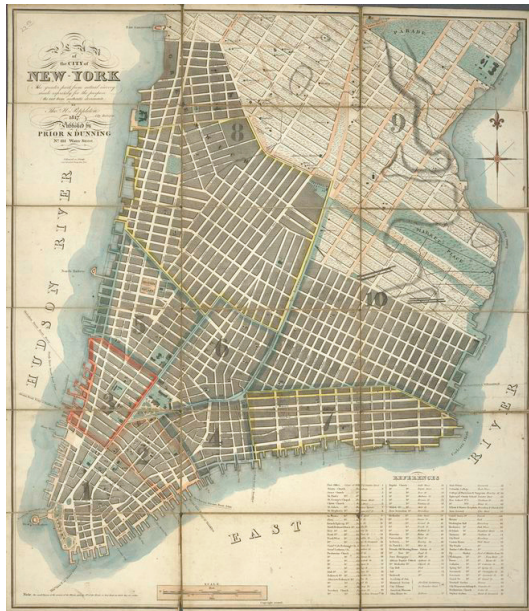
WITH THE KIDS
Sixteenth Annual Family Party
5:00 p.m.
American Museum of Natural History
Central Park West and 79th St.
www.amnh.org



COURTESY MIXED GREENS

ADIA MILLETT
THE BIRTH OF BARDO
Mixed Greens
531 West 26th Street
October 8 through November 7

Meaning lurks just out of reach in *Birth of Bardo*, Adia Millett's third solo show at Mixed Greens. Photographs of previous installations and Millett's debut film, from which this surreal show takes its name, use found objects to depict scenes ranging from the atmospheric (barred windows, shadowy corners) to the disturbing (an ax embedded in a wall, a hand emerging beseechingly from the earth). Millett's visual language is cryptic, but peppered with familiar symbols like wings, chairs, stairs, and coffins. Alongside the provocative imagery is a site-specific installation called *Sending Love* (2009, above) that invites viewers to enter a fanciful tableau in which a lamp's light morphs into a painted field against the walls, while illuminating a flock of model airplanes that hover overhead.



COURTESY NYPL

MAPPING NEW YORK'S SHORELINE, 1609–2009
New York Public Library
5th Avenue and 42nd Street
Through June 26, 2010

Four hundred years ago, Henry Hudson discovered the river that would bear his name, venturing north almost to what is now Albany. Maps from his explorations of rivers and harbors are on display in *Mapping New York's Shoreline, 1609–2009*, among other rarely viewed atlases, journals, city plans, and an animation that overlays modern buildings on the former landscape. Beyond their visual appeal, these documents tell a story of New York's evolving identity and preoccupations, from the first maps, created to exploit trading and strategic advantages, to 19th-century documents charting unfolding urbanization (like the 1817 *Plan of the City of New-York*, above) and recent ecological surveys.



Fittingly for one of the last Architectural League exhibits to be shown in the august salons of the Villard Houses, *Toward the Sentient City* has the lively feel of a studio in the days before the final crit. Surrounded by whirling objects, video projections, diagrams, and people with laptops, wandering through the gallery feels like stumbling backstage at a performance—which it is, in a way. Because most of the five installations are located in the city at large, the gallery acts more like centrifuge than center stage, introducing us to the projects and then spinning us outside to find them. The installations offer different visions of an imminent future where computers are embedded into everyday objects, making the environment capable of monitoring our behavior, responding to it, and even directing it. By taking the emergence of

the sentient city for granted, the projects challenge us to decide how we will perform when we finally find ourselves within it.

Each of the five projects raises its own questions on ubiquitous computing and critical participation. *Too Smart City* is an assortment of street furniture that trip over themselves trying to be hyper-responsive: A street sign rotates to flash schizophrenic pictograms at you; a bench tilts you off if you try to lie down on it; and a trashcan throws unauthorized garbage right back at you. *Breakout!* is a Twitter feed and website that directs freelancers to temporary pop-up locations in the city where printers, wi-fi, and office furniture have been set up, so that people can have the camaraderie of work without the confines of a coffee shop. *Natural Fuse* takes the idea of carbon offsets and shrinks it to tabletop

scale, with a grid of houseplants hooked up to a lamp. The amount of CO₂ that the plants can process determines how long you are able to keep the lamp on. Use too much electricity, and the plant is killed by vinegar injection. *Amphibious Architecture* is a series of floating sensors in the East and Bronx Rivers that measure water quality and convey the information via different colors of light. The sensors brighten when fish swim by, and also allow text messages to be conveyed to the fish underwater. Finally, *Trash Track* adds RFID tags to over 3,000 items of garbage, and tracks them using cellphone towers. It visualizes the often-circuitous route of everyday waste, making the chain of disposal transparent. All the works have fascinating websites, but the only one completely contained in the gallery is *Too Smart City*; the others are

mostly installed off-site.

Toward the Sentient City is an extension of the 2006 Situated Technologies symposium, whose members have several pamphlets available for free online. The pamphlets make excellent reading, and their rigor and wit does shore up some of the deficiencies of the current exhibition. One of the goals of the Situated Technologies group, in the tradition of Reyner Banham, is to make architects more comfortable with technology, and technologists more comfortable with space-making. A parallel goal could be to make architect-technologists more comfortable with being serious, or at least deadpan; most of the works exhibited suffer a surplus of silliness. Moreover, in contrast to the pamphlets, which take either a broadly holistic or a hyper-local view of the world—both activist stances—most of the projects at the exhibition seem oddly inward-looking. This traps them in the gray zone between rooted specificity and universal applicability, reducing their polemical impact.

Despite these limitations, the exhibition space is worth seeing. Beneath the mirror by the door is a table with a plush red rug and some chairs, where visitors can browse the exhibit's Open Archive of provocative online artworks. Thirty-six unrolled tubes of paper circle the room at full height, their bright yellow housings forming a witty bullnose below the existing moldings, a lightweight covering for the paint-encrusted McKim-designed walls behind. For just as the ambiguous title of the show points backward to Le Corbusier and forward to ambient computing, the installation offers the singular chance to see radical visions of what architecture could become, housed within the culmination of what architecture was once able to be.

PING KWAN IS AN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER AT KOHN PEDERSEN FOX.

Fudging Symmetry

The Poetics of a Wall Projection
Jan Turnovsky
Translated by Kent Kleinman
Architectural Association, \$26.00

God isn't always in the details. What is, however, according to Jan Turnovsky, is the repressed anxiety of the architects who design them. Originally published in German in 1985 and newly translated by Kent Kleinman, *The Poetics of a Wall Projection* is an exhaustive analysis of a small, pilaster-like protrusion on a wall in the Stonborough House in Vienna (1928), a protrusion that architect/philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein designed to work his way out of a pickle.

Because the house's breakfast room is part of a semi-detached volume, the exterior and interior faces of its southeast wall share a different axis of symmetry. This means that the single window that Wittgenstein wanted to place on this wall could either be centered on its exterior elevation or its interior, but not both.

This is not a terribly unusual situation in architecture, and Turnovsky provides examples of designers who, for various reasons, privileged one over the other. Adolf Loos centered his windows on the interior of the Duschnitz and Mandle Houses, while in contrast Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach chose to preserve the symmetrical austerity of the facade in his Belvedere project. For Wittgenstein, however, who was so obsessed with proportions that he demolished the freshly plastered ceiling of a room to raise it three centimeters, a compromise was out of the question. To alleviate his angst, he centered the window on the exterior, and designed the wall projection (or "WP," as Turnovsky affectionately calls it) to augment the proportions of the interior wall so that the window appeared symmetrical on the inside. This sounds simple enough. The problem is that every attempt to restore equilibrium on one wall of the house led to instability in others. This is in part because the house's plan (which Wittgenstein inherited from the architect Paul Engelmann, who started the project) was largely based on a traditional Viennese mansion, with asymmetrically displaced rooms surrounding a central entrance hall. This resulted in walls

with irregularly positioned openings, which made it next to impossible to create interior elevations that obeyed the laws of symmetry. The Stonborough House is what you get when you try to force the interior of something empirically driven (like a British country house) toward conceptual purity (like the Villa Rotunda). The two don't mix. What results are things like L-shaped radiators stuck into corners, mysterious wall niches, and metal curtains on pulleys that disappear into the basement through slits in the floor.

The first part of the book cautiously links this tension between the conceptual and the empirical in the Stonborough House to Wittgenstein's nearly opposing early and late philosophical periods. Before his two-year stint as an architect, he was convinced that everything meaningful that could possibly be said could be demonstrated using the rules of logic. (All else, he famously argued, "had to be passed over in silence.") After the Stonborough House, he refuted the idea that language was governed solely by universal rules, and began seeking the meaning of words in the real-life circumstances within which they are used.

Turnovsky's treatment of the sticky relationship between abstract

concepts and the intractable material realities of buildings is excellent, as relevant today as it was when it was first written. However, most of the book is dedicated to a laborious deconstruction of the WP. Separate chapters devoted to its front surface, its edge, and its side, for example, vacillate between rational analysis and associative flights of fancy (where eventually the WP "appears to swell like a sine wave"). All of this destabilizes any value one might be tempted to assign this or any other piece of architectural syntax in the building. This part of the book will be enjoyable for those nostalgic for the semiotic craze of the 1980s. For everyone else, it will feel like a long and unproductive detour. By the time you make it through the references to Benjamin, Croce, Norberg-Shulz, Mukarovsky, Kant, Adorno, Schlegel, and Eco, you have all but lost track of the little bump in the wall (or the house) that triggered the discussion in the first place. But it is only through this labyrinthine process that you slowly realize that *The Poetics of a Wall Projection* was never, after all, about the WP. What this late poet, musician, and architectural theorist has given us is a poetic mirror of Wittgenstein's lifelong uncertainty; of his inability in the end to

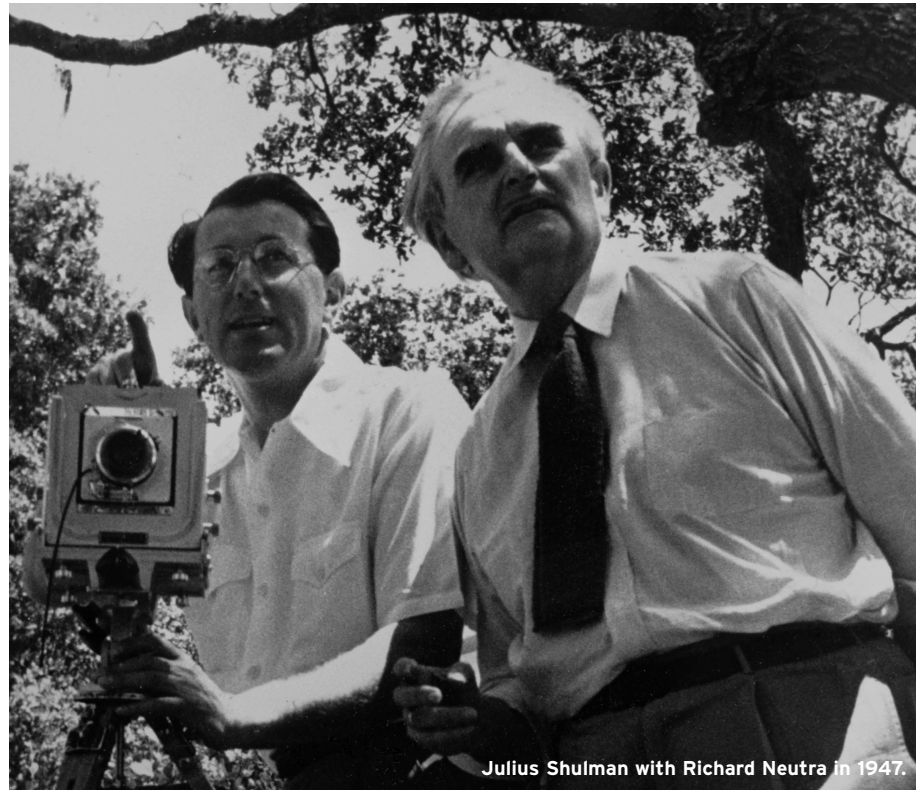
confidently say whether the answers he was seeking were located in the physical stuff of the world, or in the underlying principles that govern it. Through this, we get a rare glimpse into fin-de-siècle Vienna, which Wittgenstein shared with figures like Karl Kraus, Sigmund Freud, and Loos; for whom words, thoughts, and objects were signs of the tension between the surface of things and the deeper truths lurking just beneath it.

BRADLEY HORN IS DIRECTOR OF THE MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM AT THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK.

THE POETICS OF A WALL PROJECTION

Jan Turnovsky

ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION LONDON



Julius Shulman with Richard Neutra in 1947.

COURTESY ARTHOUSE FILMS

Shulman's Joy

Visual Acoustics:
The Modernism of Julius Shulman
Cinema Village
22 East 12th St.
Opens October 9

For anyone who was never graced by the presence and persona of Julius Shulman, Eric Bricker's documentary film *Visual Acoustics* gives a precious and intimate entry into the life, work, and philosophy of one of the greatest photographers of modern architecture, who died this summer at the age of 98.

The film, which opens at Cinema Village on October 9, will certainly stir up fond memories for those who knew "Uncle Julius." It

reveals him as a master of the art of living, radiating a lightness of being and appreciation for the people and environment around him. It also reveals him as a stubborn and demanding artist who as a young man "took corrections" from Neutra and Schindler and was capable of giving just as harsh corrections to novices encountered on his projects or even on the filmmakers' own shoot.

Visual Acoustics tells several stories in parallel—of Julius Shulman the humanist, artist, activist, and image-maker, and of the modern movement and Shulman's major place in that history. The film cycles through the chapters of his life, from his youth on a Connecticut farm to his growing up, camera in hand, at the same time as the city of Los Angeles. It chronicles Shulman finding his calling with the making of a photo of an early Neutra house, and the world of collaborations to follow.

Shulman's chronology is interwoven with that of the history and ambition of the European modern movement and the rise of California modernism through animated "visual symphonies," designed by New York motion graphics specialists Trollback + Company. Incorporating Shulman's images, historical photos, and text, the animation work is subtle in its attempt to formally weave image to image, focusing our attention on the compositional strength and dynamism of Shulman's photos. Lines merge with lines, or emerge as webs to reveal the perspectival structure of both image and architecture. This subtle play is jarringly interrupted with a brief series of Monty Python-esque collages used to wittily present historical facts about the modern movement, potentially undercutting the historical credibility of the content.

Fortunately, this comic interlude is counterbalanced by poignant interviews with scholars and curators (Thomas Hines and Joseph Rosa), architect clients (Mark Lee and Frank Gehry), and friends and fans (Ed Ruscha and Tom Ford) articulating the historical relevance of specific images, the architecture photographed, and the architect-collaborators.

To complement the architectural history lessons, the film gives us personal stories about Shulman, the architects, and their architecture through social calls to the owners of several photographed houses. Witnessing these visits, it is clear that Shulman's photographs were vital in restoring Neutra's Miller House and others to their original condition. But we also witness the ongoing relationships Shulman maintained with the original or subsequent owners of the houses he photographed.

Bricker, who befriended Shulman over the course of several years prior to making the film, takes us into the inner sanctum of Shulman's Raphael Soriano-designed studio. Here we are given insight into the quality of space in which he worked, the personal relationships with all those around him—his daughter, gallerists, and work associates—and the volume of images produced over his career. The man and his glass treasure-trove of images impressed Bricker at their first meeting, and in his film we see this archive being prepared for its future life in the Getty Foundation Archives. But most of all, it is this last-minute glimpse of Shulman's joie de vivre that is the ultimate strength and value of Bricker's film.

BETH WEINSTEIN IS FOUNDER OF THE NEW YORK-BASED DESIGN STUDIO ARCHITECTURE AGENCY.



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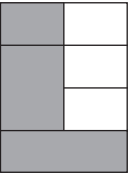
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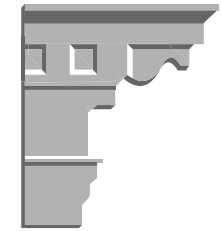
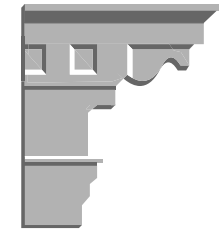


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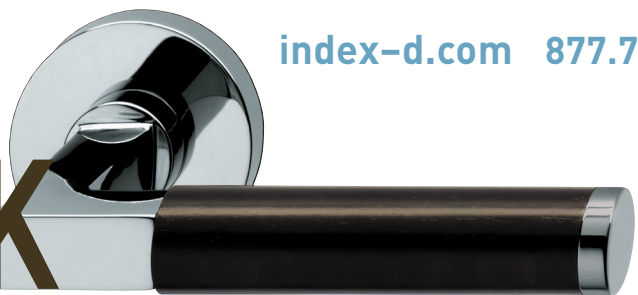
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OSLO AFTER OPERA



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY HAV EENDON; CHRISTOPHER HAGELUND; MVRDV; HERREROS ARQUITECTOS

When the Norwegian Opera House opened in 2008, it stood in island-like isolation on the Oslo waterfront. The building-as-landscape created a new image of the country for people around the world, in much the same way that Jørn Utzon's Sydney Opera House announced Australia's modernity. If Snøhetta's building does not quite match Utzon's in visual drama, it betters it as an urban strategy, and as an impetus for a local change with global implications.

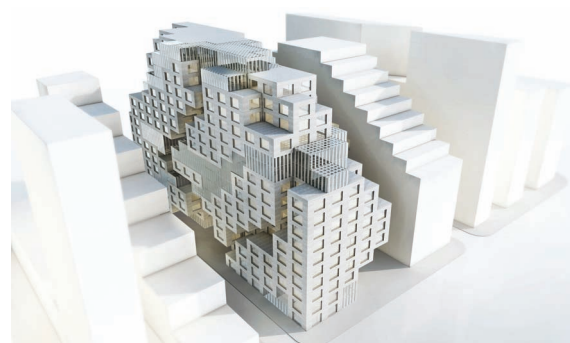
Snøhetta's ingenious building is the first major piece of a complex plan to redevelop Oslo's formerly gritty waterfront, known as Bjørvika—a plan that marries ambitious architecture with layered urbanism, all guided by a strong public hand. Like many American cities, Oslo's waterfront is cut off from its core by a busy, six-lane highway. To reach Bjørvika and the Opera House, pedestrians must cross one of a handful of utilitarian elevated pedestrian bridges.

Snøhetta gambled that their building would be enough of a magnet to pull people over that busy barrier—and it is.

The Opera House is not merely a building to be captured in photos or to be gazed upon from afar. It is a building to get to, to climb upon. While its white stone reads as flat in photographs, the sloping surface is deeply textured—on a recent visit, I climbed the building in the rain, and it was a pleasure to watch water zigzag across the surface in careful-

ly placed channels. The ascent is a deliberative and memorable one, culminating in stunning views of city, sky, ocean, forests, and mountains. Open 24 hours a day, the Opera's roofscape is an unconditional public amenity.

The environs around the building will improve remarkably when a tunnel, currently under construction, is completed that will pull traffic under the fjord. Even in its half-finished state, the tunnel has become an urban amenity in its own



Clockwise from top left: The plan for Bjørvika with the Norwegian Opera House sited at top; the opera house exterior, Snøhetta's building-as-landscape; rendering of a new office by MVRDV, located near the train station; Herreros Arquitectos' Munch Museum.

right: One Sunday last month, thousands of people strolled through the dimly lit concrete tube, a perfect place for a weekend walk, and another way to experience Oslo's waterfront with fresh eyes. The old highway will be replaced with a landscaped boulevard, easing pedestrian access and reconnecting the city with the water and its emerging cultural hub.

Behind the Opera House and across a narrow river channel, the new Edvard Munch Museum will rise, housing the country's other great icon, *The Scream*. Designed by Spain's Herreros Arquitectos, the muted building will also make the most of the area's dramatic views. A new city library is planned for an adjacent site, so the collection of cultural buildings will mix day and nighttime uses, and tourists with locals.

Near the historic central train station adjacent to Bjørvika, a new office district, known as the "bar code," features a block of buildings that are notched, punched, and eroded, including a new financial services headquarters by MVRDV, currently under construction. Nearby, new housing and retail will ring the fjord, but shipping and transportation have not been banished. A cruise-ship launch has been retained, and a major container ship-

ping facility is being moved south, striking a balance between a working waterfront and recreational uses.

Oslo's integrated urban strategy seems so logical and simple. And yet one need only look at Diller Scofidio + Renfro's Institute for Contemporary Art building in Boston, another waterfront cultural attraction meant to revive a port area, which sits largely alone, surrounded by stalled private development, to see how rarely good architecture and sound redevelopment planning seem to meet in the U.S.

Oslo, a city of roughly 550,000 people, is small compared to Stockholm or Copenhagen. Yet the tables have turned in the region, with an ascendant Norway largely insulated from the global economic downturn by its vast mineral wealth, while cosmopolitan Sweden and Denmark ride the waves with the marketplace. As Norway's presence on the global stage grows, its capital city's most public face is changing. For temperamentally modest Norwegians, the redevelopment of Bjørvika signals something of an arrival. For the rest of us, it shows how to keep urban momentum moving after the press has flown off to the next icon.

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